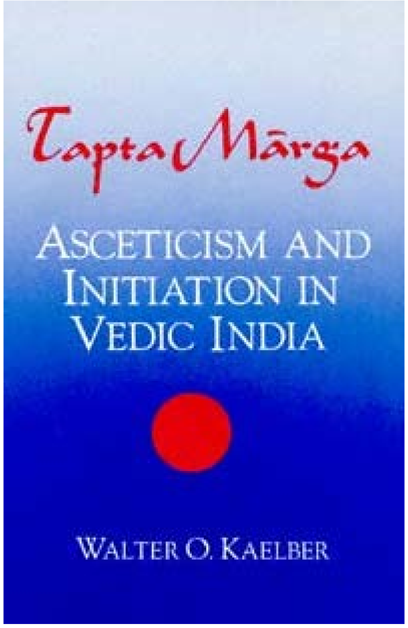

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Tapta Marga

Asceticism and Initiation In Vedic India

Walter O. Kaelber

State University of New York Press

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For My Parents, Otto and Louise

Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

2

The Vedic Inter-entities: An Overview

10

Observations on Method

1. *Tapas*, Rainfall, and Fertility 15

15

Natural Heat: Sun and Fire 17

Ascetic Heat: The *Brahmacarin* 20

Ritual Heat

2. *Tapas*, Birth, and Spiritual Rebirth 29

30

Tapas and Procreation

33

Tapas and Spiritual Rebirth

3. *Tapas* and Purification 45

45

Tapas: Destructive Heat and Purification

49

Tapas: Pain, Asceticism, and Purification

53

Tapas: Penance and Purification

4. *Tapas*, Knowledge, and Spiritual Rebirth 61

62

"In the Beginning" and "On High"

64

Now and Here Below

5. A Vedic Watershed: *Karma/Jñana* 73

---

6. *Tapas*, Knowledge, and Liberation 83

83

Tapas and Knowledge in the Principal Upanisads

93

Homology, Meditation, Liberation

7. The Emergence and Development of Brahmanic Asceticism 101

101

Heuristic Models

109

The *Brahmacarin*

8. The "Dramatic" Element in Vedic Initiation 125

126

Symbols of Death, Danger, and Difficult Passage in Early Vedic Initiation

133

The Doctrine of Transmigration and Its Impact on Initiation Symbolism

Conclusions 143

Notes 149

General Works and Translations Cited 189

Index 195

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Introduction

Mircea Eliade introduces his work *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* by observing that in the post-Vedic period, "four basic and interdependent concepts . . . bring us directly to the core of Indian spirituality." 1 These basic and interdependent concepts are *karma, maya, nirvana,* and *yoga.* Given the interrelated character of these basic elements in the post-Vedic period, Eliade contends that a "coherent history of Indian thought could be written starting from any one of [them] and *the other three would inevitably have to be discussed."*2Eliade's work on yoga therefore achieves two objectives. First, it is quite evidently a discussion of the major variations or "forms" of yoga. Second, because yoga is one of the four basic elements of the post-Vedic period, Eliade's work also presents an integrated picture of post-Vedic religion in general. By dealing with yoga, and relatedly *karma, maya,* and *nirvana,* Eliade is able to understand and interpret post-Vedic religion from the perspective of its "center."3

Just as the post-Vedic period has its basic and interdependent concepts, its central "inter-entities," so too does the Vedic period itself. I suggest, therefore, that an investigation of five basic elements, namely heat *(tapas)*, initiation, sacrifice (*yajña*), knowledge (*vidya, jñana*), and homology (*nidana, bandhu*)brings us directly to the "center" of Vedic religion. Our central concern is *tapas*ormore correctly, the Sanskrit root *tap* and its derivatives. Of the variegated connotations of *tapas* the most significant is that of "asceticism;" and it is precisely in this context that we find *tapas* invariably interwoven with initiation. Just as yoga in particular is characterized by an *"initiatory* structure,"4 as Eliade emphasizes, so too is asceticism in general. As a consequence, initiation and the multivalent symbols

of initiation are for us of great importance, in fact second only to *tapas* itself. Our concern with *tapas* and symbols of initiation leads "inevitably," however, to the other basic elements: sacrifice, homology, and knowledge. Although these three are not our central concern, their overriding importance in Vedic religion as well as their inextricable connection with *tapas* and initiation give them a conspicuous place in our presentation. Our primary concern with the history and significance of the variegated forms of *tapas* should therefore open up to an integrated and unified understanding of Vedic religion as a whole.

The Vedic Inter-Entities: An Overview

Tapas

The central and most literal meaning of the Sanskrit root *tap* is "to give out heat," "to make hot," "to be hot." Relatedly, the noun *tapas* is most evidently rendered as "heat" or "warmth." From these basic meanings, however, radiate multiple denotations and connotations. As David Knipe rightly observes, translators and interpretors of the Veda have continually assigned to *tapas* meanings that are sadly inadequate. 5 Particular attention must therefore be directed toward understanding the connotations of *tapas* in the varied contexts in which the word appears. We must relatedly demonstrate how the many forms and meanings of *tapas* continually evolve out of one another, often remain "transparent" to one another, sometimes diverge from one another, and occasionally rejoin one another. A curious and stout-hearted reader might, at this point, wish to consider the final chapter wherein the complexities of this "heated career" are summarized. For those others who wish to consider that summation only when armed with the chapters preceding it, we offer here a suggestion of what lies ahead.

Tapas must often be seen as both a process and a product. This is well illustrated at *Atharva Veda* 7, 61, 1:

yad agne tapasa tapa upatapyamahe tapah

Here the devotees of the fire-god Agni *create tapas by means of tapas* and also *heat up tapas* in themselves.6 An often-repeated phrase of the Brahmanas

*sa tapo 'tapyata*7

also suggests that *tapas* is both process and product. Through *tapas* one generates *tapas*. Through a "heated effort" (i.e., *tapas*)one generates heat (i.e., *tapas*).As Uma Marina Vesci observes, "This bi-polarity of the term, which includes both the end to be achieved and the means to achieve or produce it, remains one of its constant characteristics throughout all the devel-

opment of its millenary history." 8 The fact that *tapas* is both process and product is most evident when *tapas* assumes the form of ascetic activity. It refers then to the "heated effort" of such asceticism but also to the "magical heat"9 which that effort produces. Such "magical heat" is often perceived as a mobile commodity which can be not only generated but also lost and restored.10 It also has a sacred quality. It "saturates" the practitioner, elevating him above a strictly human or profane condition.11

In addition to "ascetic heat," the variegated expressions of *tapas* seem almost endless. *Tapas* reveals itself in a multitude of dynamic forms: consuming heat, incubating heat, impregnating heat, kindling heat, orgasmic heat, hatching heat, lustful heat, jealous heat, painful heat, contemplative heat, devotional heat, revelatory heat, ecstatic heat, purifying heat, atoning heat. . . . *Tapas* is conspicuously active and creative at every level of reality. Not only is it perceived as the force behind creation, it permeates nearly every aspect and every avenue of that creation. The final significance of *tapas,* however, lies not simply in its ubiquitous quality. Nor can its significance be fully understood by analyzing its role at the cosmogonic, the ritual, and the human levels. The real importance of *tapas* lies in its synthesizing capacity, in its ability to establish "identities" or homologies in the Vedic world. Through the "connecting" capacity of *tapas,* "above" and "below," then and now, macrocosm and microcosm are woven into a sacred whole.

Understanding *tapas* brings us to the heart of Vedic religion. It also opens an arena of universal dimension. Heat has been regarded as a basic form and expression of the sacred throughout man's religious history. Eliade has therefore noted that *tapas* is firmly rooted in the "incontrovertibly ancient and universally disseminated tradition" of magical heat.12 The forms of sacred heat which appear in the Vedic tradition invariably find counterparts, equivalents, or homologues in countless other cultures and in countless other times. In dealing with *tapas*, then, we deal with a universal form or ubiquitous structure of evident prestige. Whether it be cosmogonic heat, devotional heat, ecstatic heat, revelatory heat, purifying heat, or multiple other forms, our inquiry into *tapas* links us implicitly but firmly with that "universally disseminated tradition" to which Eliade refers.13 Within that universal tradition, however, *tapas* holds a privileged position, for as Eliade also observes, because of the "extremely complex ideology" which grew up around it, the tradition of sacred heat reached in India "a full flowering unparalleled anywhere else in the world."14 It is noteworthy also that *tapas* often provides a bridge between archaic religion on the one hand and "high" religion on the other. There is, for example, clear continuity-even lines of identity-be-

tween that heat needed to generate rainfall, fertility, and biological life and that heat which yields liberating knowledge of ultimate reality.

The most significant connotation of the word *tapas* is "asceticism." Here again our Vedic inquiry is implicitly but firmly rooted in a universal context. Asceticism is nearly universal in the history of religions. The major ascetic forms which appear cross-culturally are clearly present in the Veda. Further, because the origins of asceticism are found in man's prehistory, specific ascetic forms such as fasting, chastity, and seclusion are common to both archaic religion and the Vedic world. Evident continuity between the archaic and the Vedic is also seen in the goals of ascetic endeavor. Self-denial for purposes of attaining purity, effecting penance, inducing visions, or avoiding evil is common in the archaic world and leaves its reverberating echo in Vedic literature as well. Unlike primitive ordeal and austerity, however, the ascetic endeavors of "classical" and "modern" 15 religions are frequently grounded in a philosophically developed and

well-articulated system. In this regard, one would be hard-pressed to find a more well-articulated rationale for asceticism or a more systematic and delineated program of ascetic behavior than that of Vedic India.

Initiation and the Symbols of Transformation

Like asceticism, initiation-with its attendant symbols of transformation-is a prestigious and universal structure in the history of religions. Emerging from his initiatory passage, the initiate is not only socially changed but personally changed as well. Patterns and symbols of initiation found in both classical and modern religions invariably find their origins and homologues in archaic society. Once again, then, our concern with initiation symbolism roots us implicitly but firmly in a universal context.

Symbols of initiation convey in graphic fashion the fundamental transition or change undergone by the initiate. When viewed morphologically all such symbols may, I suggest, be divided into two major groups.16 Both of these primary "forms" are well represented in Vedic literature. There is, first, that complex of imagery which must be termed gynecological and obstetrical. The most conspicuous symbols here are the womb, the embryo, and birth. The emphasis upon spiritual rebirth is very evident here and striking images of initiatory death sometimes precede such images of rebirth. Should the element of symbolic death be emphasized, this initiatory form may be termed "dramatic."17 The second primary form of initiation symbolism employs the image of a passage. Such passage is frequently difficult, frequently dangerous, and frequently both. The passage clearly suggests a transition,

often of prolonged duration, from a less desirable to a more desirable state. Should the difficult or dangerous aspect of this transition be emphasized, this initiatory form may again be termed "dramatic." The Veda continually demonstrates that these two forms are often joined. Nonetheless, the structural distinction is a real and significant one.

As stated, ascetic endeavor invariably entails an initiatory structure. The conjunction of sacred heat and initiation is therefore often observable in man's religious history. We have chosen to term this universal conjunction *the heated passage*. It is frequently conspicuous at the archaic level during initiations into manhood. There the production of ritual heat or ceremonial sweat is often integral to the rite of transition. Particularly conspicuous is the "heated passage" of shamanic initiation. Through various ascetic constraints the initiate heats himself and in so doing facilitates his passage to sacred and visionary realms. The ascetic scenario is in fact a "period of incubation" 18 from which the shaman is reborn through a magical and generative heat. Of related interest are the Himalayan ascetics of Tibet. Like the shaman's journey, their initiatory passage to a more sacred state is characterized by ascetic endeavor and transforming heat (i.e., *gtum-mö*).19 In Christian mysticism, too, the journey to transcendence is often characterized by heat. It is indeed an inner heat of ecstacy that warms the path to divine union.20 Of particular interest also is the far-flung tradition of alchemy. As a spiritual endeavor alchemy found its center in an effort to transcend man's broken, fallen, and tarnished mode of being. From its archaic beginnings to its sophisticated expression in Christian, Islamic, Chinese, and Indian culture, the alchemical effort to transmute and transform the very spiritual substance of man can only be seen as an initiatory passage. And that passage was invariably heated not only by an ancient fire or a medieval athanor but also by ascetic renunciation. These limited examples suggest that the "heated passage," so central to Vedic religion, has its homologues far and wide.

The conjunction of *tapas* and initiation is continually evident in the Veda; the "heated passage" has here varied forms. Perhaps the most significant is in conjunction with the ritual process. The sacrifice is the primary vehicle of spiritual rebirth in Vedic religion. It is, in fact, from this elaborate rite that the consecrated sacrificer, i.e., *diksita-yajamana,* is continually reborn. The sacrificial scenario, from opening *Diksa* to closing *Avabhrtha,* is, however, a prolonged endeavor. The *diksikta-yajamana* pursues a passage which is not only sacrificial in structure but clearly initiatory as well. Moreover, that passage is accompanied throughout by *tapas;* it is, in fact, made possible by *tapas.* We witness therefore three coterminous and interwoven scenarios: the

sacrificial structure, the ascetic structure, and the initiatory structure. The ritual path to spiritual rebirth is, beyond doubt, a "heated passage," or more precisely: a *tapta-marga.* 21

Just as the "career" of the *yajamana* may be termed a *tapta-marga,* so too may the "career" of the Vedic student, i.e., the *brahmacarin.* From opening *Upanayana* to concluding *Samavartana,* the *brahmacarin* generates *tapas* throughout his initiatory passage. In fact, it is precisely *tapas* that makes his rebirth possible.

The "career" of the ascetic, be he forest hermit (i.e., *vanaprastha)* or world renouncer (e.g., *sannyasin, bhiksu, pravrajita, parivrajaka, muni*)is also in its own particular way a *tapta-marga.* The ascetic's path to liberating knowledge is made possible essentially and conspicuously by *tapas.* The external and active as well as the internal and contemplative "journeys" of the ascetic must be seen as two interrelated yet distinct varieties of the "heated passage."

In the later *dharma* literature the ideal life of the "twice-born" was clearly mapped out through four stages, each with its appropriate aspirations and obligations. These stages are designated as *asramas,* a word derived from the root *Sram* and there with clearly implying the effort inherent in each of the four successive "careers." The conjunction of *sram* and *tap* in the Veda is ubiquitous and central. The *brahmacarya asrama* of the student, the *grhastha asrama* of the *diksita-yajamana,* the later *vanaprastha* and *sannyasa asramas* of the ascetic are each in their own way a heated passage, a *tapta-marga.* Viewed as a successive whole, however, the *entire asrama system* and therewith the ideal Aryan life may also be described as a heated passage. The Brahmanic path as ideally conceived is, therefore, first and foremost a *tapta-marga.*

Sacrifice, Homology, Knowledge

Performance of the sacrifice (*yajña*) and a corresponding knowledge *(vidya)* of the esoteric "identities" and homologies (*bandhu, nidana*)which that sacrifice embodied were the very heart of Vedic orthodoxy. Although the soteriological innovations of *the jñana-kanda* (i.e., the early Upanisads) often questioned the efficacy of traditional sacrifice, for the orthodox tradition of the *karma-kanda* sacrifice remained central. Already in the *Rg Veda* the prestige of sacrifice is evident. Here the devotee and the poet-priest celebrated the cosmos and adulated its deities in the glow of the sacrificial fire. These Rg Vedic *devas* received the sacrificial gifts of man in exchange for their heavenly boons. Already here the god of fire, the eternal Agni, found a central

place. As ritual mediator between heaven and earth he served as divine messenger and paradigmatic priest.

Following the *Rg Veda,* the prestige of the sacrifice began to overshadow the very gods it ostensibly served. The growing significance of the ritual was dramatically reflected in the growing length and complexity of the ritual procedure. The comparatively simple sacrifice of the *Rg Veda* became in the Brahmanas a "supernal mystery" 22 of cosmic proportion. The sacrificial scenario was perceived as an unbroken cloth which enveloped the individual from conception and birth to death and beyond. Although the domestic rituals remained comparatively modest, the elaborate celebrations of the *srauta* ("solemn") rite were, quite literally, fit for a king.23 A growing number of ritual specialists performed their priestly skills, insuring for their patronthe "sacrificer"an abundance of earthly reward and heavenly promise.

Many of the Rg Vedic *devas* began to fade in the glow of the *srauta* fires. Some, however, grew to ever increasing importance. Agni, no longer simply a divine mediator, became a personification of the sacrificial procedure itself. Through a process of morphological imperialism he became not only ubiquitous in the tri-leveled cosmos but indispensable for its very maintenance. The sun, toooften identified with Agniremained a paradigm not only of creation and procreation but also of spiritual rebirth and renewal. The growing prestige of sacrifice insured also the fortunes of the god Soma, who became the central offering in the variegated and prolonged scenario of the ritual. But it was the "unknown god"24 of *Rg Veda* 10, 121, the Lord of Beings, Prajapati, who celebrated a truly cosmic triumph in the Brahmanas. Jan Gonda has convincingly shown that Prajapati was not simply the creation of "learned speculation."25 He was originally a "parochial" and "popular" god who presided over domestic concerns such as sexual life, conception, and birth.26 Only graduallythrough a process of morphological imperialism similar to that evidenced by Agnidid he become associated and ultimately equated with the sacrifice.27 In time, Prajapatilike Agnicame to personify the ritual. He embodied its mystery, its majesty, its generative vitality, and its paradigmatic power. As personification of the entire sacrificial endeavor this one-time parochial and domestic deity attained his ultimate apotheosis.

Developing the implications of some late Rg Vedic hymns, creation itself was now perceived as a cosmic sacrifice. This was true paradigmatically and "in the beginning" but also "now" and continually. The sacrifice, when "spread," covered

both then and now. It was *yajña* itself which both generated and maintained the world of interrelated name and form. *Yajña* was the ultimate support, the cosmic foundation. To spread the sacrifice was to cele-

brate creation itself, and for that reason J. Koller is right to translate *yajña* not simply as sacrifice but as "sacrificial celebration." 28 In this context, *Rg Veda* 7, 10, 5 already and appropriately referred to Agni as the "priest of joy. "29

The paradigmatic and cosmogonic dimension of sacrificeas well as its power to generate and embody cosmic "connections"is well illustrated in the *Purusa Sukta of Rg Veda* 10, 90. The personified *yajña* is here (v. 16) the mechanism of sacrifice, the object sacrificed, and the recipient of that sacrifice. Through *yajña* a series of homologies is established wherein components of (1) the Cosmic Person, (2) the primordial sacrifice, and (3) the cosmos itself are equated or linked in a network of identities. Of the countless Vedic homologies one deserves mention here. The Primal Person, invariably Prajapati, is homologized with the sacrifice, but the sacrifice is simultaneously homologized or equated with the sacrificer *(yajamana)*. Prajapati is the sacrifice and the sacrifice is the "sacrificer." Therein lies the prestige and power of the *yajamana*.

Far less famous than *Rg Veda* 10, 90, but nearly as suggestive is another hymn of creation: *Rg Veda* 10, 130. Its symbolism is rich and will serve us well in the chapters ahead. The central image here is of weaving and all creation may, by implication, be seen as the interplaited result of a weaving process. I suggest that in the entire Vedic tradition the sacrifice itself may be perceived as a great loom in which and through which all levels of reality are interwoven. But even more importantly, the sacrifice must be seen as a great *conceptual* loom, whichthrough endless homologies or identitiesweaves together as warp and woof the many threads of reality. Within the conceptual loom of *yajña* microcosm and macrocosm, then and now, above and below, divine and human, mythical and ritual are woven into a comprehensible and controllable cosmos. *Rg Veda* 10, 130, 2 and *Atharva Veda* 10, 7, 44 both suggest that the ritual mantras are the shuttle within this cosmic loom. The imagery is apt, for without *brahman*, without the power inherent in ritual sound, the sacrifice could not be sustained. Viewing the Veda as a whole, however, we may expand upon this imagery. In the orthodox tradition of the *karma-kanda* it is also the officiating priests and the participating sacrificer whoin their cognitive and physical movementweave, as does a mobile shuttle, the threads of reality together.

Knowledge, homology, and sacrifice were often inseparable then in the orthodox tradition of ritual action (*karma*)*:* To *know* the esoteric *homologies* woven together by and in the *sacrifice* was to know all. He who knew *(evam vidvan)* the connections established through the sacrifice was himself "connected," i.e., rooted, here and hereafter, in primal reality itself. Although sacrifice is often cited as being the center of Vedic orthodoxy, it would be

wrong to see homology as a servant of sacrifice. Quite to the contrary, the sacrifice as conceptual loom must often be seen as the servant of an even more fundamental homologizing endeavor. This is particularly true in the Brahmanas. As Oldenberg observed, it is not description of sacrificial action (*karma*)that is central here, but rather exposition of the identities *(bandhu)* that the sacrifice embodies. 30 Knipe in his comparative study pays particular attention to the issue of "correspondence" and rightly so.31 For as Renou suggests, the entire aim of Vedic thought was to formulate correspondences.32 The Vedic mind was "constantly seeking hidden correspondences between things which belong to entirely distinct conceptual systems."33 The Sanskrit terms *bandhu* and *nidana* have yielded numerous translations. We have suggested the most prevalent English renderings: "homology," "connection," "identity," "correspondence," "equivalence," "correlation."

Although the effort to establish homologies frequently *employed* the sacrifice, it must be stressed that the homologizing endeavor of Vedic and Brahmanic India is so fundamental or over-arching that it often transcends the limits of sacrifice itself. For example, the entire sacrificial endeavor of the orthodox tradition was, in time, homologized with the ascetic life-style of individuals on the outer fringes of Vedic orthodoxy. So too, the ascetic "career" of the *brahmacarin* was homologized with the sacrificial scenario. In these and other contexts our use of the word *homology* goes far beyond the connotations of *bandhu* or *nidana* as these terms are used, for example, in the Brahmanas. Viewing the Veda as a whole, however, such homologizing efforts are in clear continuity with the more "limited" homologies established *within* the

sacrificial loom.

Although it is commonplace to suggest that Vedic religion found its center in ritual action, the great significance of knowledge, as suggested, must always be recognized. The etymological relation between *veda* and *vidya* (knowledge) is evident. In the orthodox tradition, ritual action and sacred knowledge worked in tandem to insure the spiritual rebirth and heavenly immortality of the *yajamana.* There is, however, one very evident trend in Vedic thought which clearly elevates sacred knowledge above ritual action. We have already prefigured the roots of this trend by indicating the great emphasis that the Brahmanas placed upon a knowledge of esoteric identities. To know the esoteric meaning of the ritual takes increasing precedence over ritual action (*karma*)itself. We shall articulate in chapters 5 and 6 how this trend eventuates in the full-blown tradition of *the jñana-kanda* with its emphasis upon liberating knowledge. The soteriological innovations of the principal Upanisads established a relationship between knowledge and sacrifice which was significantly different from that expressed in the more orthodox tradition

of the *karma-kanda* with its concern for ritual action (*karma*). Our purpose here has been to review the relationship between sacrifice, homology, and knowledge as it existed in that more orthodox tradition. The manner in which that relationship changed in the *jñana-kanda,* as well as the reasons for the growing significance of knowledge in that tradition, will occupy us at a more appropriate time.

Observations on Method

Our central concern with *tapas* and initiation symbolism unifies our discussion with regard to content. The discussion is, however, also unified by our method of inquiry. Under the impact of such scholars as Renou and Gonda, Knipe quite correctly describes the Veda as a "living unit." 34 Despite the innovations that Vedic orthodoxy incorporated, it sought always to understand itself as a consistent and mutually reinforcing tradition. Despite the diversities of Vedic religion, the texts repeatedly and self-consciously seek continuity. This is conspicuous already in the Samhitas and culminates in the post-Vedic synthesis of the *Manava-Dharma-Sastra.* We are invited, then, to treat the Veda as a living unit, as a self-conscious whole, because the Veda itself continually affirms that perspective.

Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, in her work on Siva, suggests that an understanding of mythological patterns is ill-served by strictly historical investigation for the very reason that what is obscure or implied in the earlier versions of a myth often becomes explicit in later expressions.35 In a similar fashion, the variegated forms of *tapas* may often be apprehended and comprehended far more fruitfully if they are not partitioned through a relentless concern with historical sequence. Approaching the Veda as a rigid succession of texts is often as sterile as it is impossible. A phenomenological or morphological approach is often necessary to apprehend a given form and its religious significance. Our practice of treating the Veda as a living unit is therefore justified on the grounds of both the Veda's own self-perception and the methodological virtues of a phenomenological or morphological approach. In our effort, then, to articulate and understand certain Vedic forms, particularly the forms of *tapas* and the forms of initiation symbolism, we have frequently drawn upon earlier and later texts simultaneously. With a momentary disregard for chronology, we frequently portray a given form in its ahistorical fullness.

A strictly phenomenological or morphological approach is, however, suspect, for as van der Leeuw has observed, "phenomenology knows nothing of historical development."36 As a consequence, Pettazzoni, in a now famous

and oft-cited essay, 37 insisted that phenomenology is incomplete without a concern for history. Just as Eliade in his study on yoga was concerned with a "history of its forms,"38 so too a concern with historical change and development is central to our inquiry. Because all Vedic forms and concepts are subject to change, we must regard the Veda not only as a living unit but also as an arena of transformation. Despite the Vedic concern with "unalterable" truth, change is conspicuous and significant. Yet it is precisely because of the often self-conscious concern with perpetuating and elucidating the "Unalterable" that change is always and inseparably bound by continuity. Change continually expresses itself through the revalorization, reinterpretation, or modification of old forms. And significantly, the Vedic propensity for

homology is placed at the service of synthesizing, reconciling, and equating evident variations in form and intent in an effort to preserve this continuity through change.

It is between the touchstones of unified structure and historical development, between form and revalorized form, between continuity and change that our methodology steers its way. Our lights as we navigate this course are neither theoretical nor imposed from without. They radiate rather from the literature itself. At varying points and depending upon the particular issue under consideration, the fact of change impresses itself upon the reader of these texts. Understanding is then possible only if the variations and changes through historythat is, from text to textare described. In many circumstances, a strictly morphological or phenomenological analysis would be not only inadequate but also misleading in an attempt to understand "what actually happened."39 Only the presentation itself will demonstrate whether our emphasis upon unified structure or upon historical development was at any given moment justified in our effort to understand Vedic religion.40

Historical development itself, however, may be apprehended from varying perspectives. Continuity, for example, may be the result of what Heesterman and others term *orthogenetic* developmentan internal, almost natural and unchallenged progression. On the other hand, historical development may demonstrate a more dialectical quality, proceeding not "in a straight line" but rather through a process of "challenge and assimilation." These and other "heuristic models" and their virtues and limitations become particularly relevant in our attempt to understand the emergence of Brahmanic asceticism and the related development of the four-fold *asrama* system.

Post-Vedic savants, reflecting upon early Indian literature, drew an explicit distinction between the *karma-kanda* and the *jñana-kanda.* Relegating particular passages to one category or the other was and is not always easy.

We may, however, oversimplify somewhat and suggest that texts or passages dealing with action and proper behavior, including the external performance of sacrifice, are in the tradition and spirit of the *karma-kanda.* By contrast, the early Upanisads, with their emphasis upon a saving knowledge, are clearly classified as *jñana-kanda.* In chapters 1 through 4 of our study we draw our material almost exclusively from the *karma-kanda,* making no reference to the soteriological and epistemological innovations of the principal Upanisads. These four chapters must not be perceived, however, as reflecting the first half of a Vedic history. The Grhya and Srauta Sutras are, for example, clearly expressions of the *karma-kanda;* historically speaking, however, they follow the early Upanisads. The distinction between *karma-kanda* and *jñana-kanda* is essentially one of content rather than chronology. Each of our first four chapters articulates, then, a different *tapas-centered* constellation: (1) *Tapas,* Rainfall, and Fertility; (2) *Tapas,* Birth, and Spiritual Rebirth; (3) *Tapas* and Purification; (4) *Tapas,* Knowledge, and Spiritual Rebirth. The material in each of these chapters is drawn from the entire *karma-kanda;* it ranges, in fact, from the *Rg Veda* through the *Manava-Dharma-Sastra* (the "Law Book" of *Manu*). Relatedly, historical development of pan-Vedic scope is often observable within any given chapter.

Chapter 5 deals with the essential Vedic watershed between *karma* (action) and *jñana* (knowledge). It is different in character from any other chapter in the book, being essentially transitional in nature. It contains information which is more general and, thereby, serves as a needed introduction to the second portion of our study. From one perspective it may be seen as a continuation of the introductory statements made above regarding the place of sacrifice in the *karma-kanda.* Because the Vedic watershed between *karma* and *jñana* is to a certain degree chronological, the chapter serves as a transition to the later Veda. As indicated, however, the watershed between *karma* and *jñana* is essentially structural rather than chronological. As a consequence, the chapter serves to introduce the innovative worldview expressed in the *jñana-kanda* and the manner in which the implications of that new worldview were assimilated by the *karma-kanda.*

The final chapters of our study demonstrate the consequences of that new worldview for (6) *Tapas*, Knowledge, and Liberation; (7) The Emergence and Development of Brahmanic Asceticism; and (8) The "Dramatic" Element in Vedic Initiation. Each of these chapters, however, draws upon material from the entire Vedic tradition ranging from the Samhitas through the Upanisads and on to the *Manava-Dharma-Sastra.* They therefore deal with the early *karma-kanda*, the innovations of the *jñana-kanda,* and the efforts of the later *karma-kanda* to assimilate those innovations. In this regard, historical development of a pan-Vedic scope is again observable in each chapter.

In every chapter of our study then a phenomenological, morphological, and structural approach is combined with an articulation of historical development. Viewing the work as a whole, however, one can discern a clear historical progression. As a consequence it is, I believe, correct to suggest that a "history of Vedic religion," organized around the central inter-entities of that tradition, emerges from our study.

Given the great role of *tapas* as a cosmogonic and paradigmatic force in Vedic thought the reader, upon considering the table of contents, may be surprised to find that no separate chapter has been devoted to that subject. It is, however, precisely because of the ubiquitous importance of *tapas* as a cosmogonic force that such a chapter proves to be unnecessary; the paradigmatic aspect of *tapas* is articulated, where appropriate, within each chapter.

The present study draws upon and greatly benefits from a large number of existing translations of the Vedic literature. We have attempted, where defensible, to cite and quote translations that are available to the general reader. Given our central concern with understanding *tapas,* however, these translations often fall short of aiding our effort. With rare exception, even the best translations invariably lock into two or three renderings of $\sqrt{tap}$, which are then used continually with apparent disregard for context and even common sense. As O'Flaherty observes: "Almost a century ago, Abel Bergaigne pointed out that one must make a choice between simplifying the Vedic lexicon and thereby having to deal with more complex ideas, or complicating the lexicon in order to simplify Vedic ideas." 41 Were we to follow the first option, we would determine the most persistently applicable renderings of the term *tapas* and use them throughout. O'Flaherty, however, continues to observe: "My own feeling is that Vedic words are more complex than Vedic contexts and that to use various contexts to illustrate rich terms is ultimately more productive than to seek to compress a rich term into a single neutral word that can be plugged into any context; for this leaves us no tool with which to find our way through the jungle of contexts other than the unequivocaland self-evidentmeaning of the word."42 As a consequence, whenever existing translations are quoted, we almost invariably leave the word *tapas* as well as all other $\sqrt{tap}$-derivaties of every part of speech untranslated. This practice, which enables us to explore more effectively the various connotations and denotations of *tapas,* sometimes and inevitably extends to other Sanskrit words as well.

One
Tapas, Rainfall, and Fertility

In the worldview of archaic man rainfall and fertility can often be insured through religious endeavor. Vedic literature continually demonstrates a similar belief. In many archaic societies a "sacred heat" is crucial in this fructifying endeavor. Relatedly, in the Vedic world *tapas* often plays an essential role in the production of rain as well as in the fertility of the fields. In Vedic literature this requisite heat may have a natural origin such as the sun or the fire. It may also be an ascetic heat or a ritual heat generated by man himself through religious activity. Vedic man, however, invariably established a web of identities or homologies between the various forms of heat which he regarded as necessary for insuring fecundity.

Natural Heat: Sun and Fire

The sun as described in Vedic literature is a great *tapasvin* (one possessed of and characterized by *tapas).* This is clear, for example, at *Vajasaneyi Samhita* 37, 11, where the sun as Súrya is not only characterized by *tapas*, but actually equated with it. *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 4, 8 states that the sun shines forth, maintaining heat upon the earth. *Rg Veda* 10, 60, 11 notes that the sun heats ($\sqrt{tap}$) downward *(nyak tapati suryah.)* . 1At *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 4 the sun fills the world with his *tapas,* and at *Atharva Veda* 13, 2, 13 he looks downward, heating ($\sqrt{tap}$)all created things.2 The generative heat of the sun, "kindly" *(sam.)*3 in nature, "moderate" *(asamtape; sutapasan)*4 in intensity, nurtures the earth and its crops. The sun, usually as Surya, heats ($\sqrt{tap}$) downward, "ripening" seeds and crops, thus helping to "mature" organic life. In a more exalted but related fashion the sun, as Rohita, original-

ly generated all mankind through its warmth ($\sqrt{tap}$). 5 At *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 20-21 all plants and animals are begotten by the sun. The fertilizing capacity of the sun is perhaps most graphically and also most enigmatically illustrated in the prolonged glorification found in *Atharva Veda* 11, 5. After repeatedly characterizing the sun by *tapas*, the hymn states in verse 12 that he, "thundering, . . has introduced *(anu-bhr)* in the earth a great virile member," and that he then "pours forth seed upon the surface of the earth," generating life.6

To consider the sun's *tapas* as a nurturing, life-quickening heat is not at all problematic for the modern mind. Far more enigmatic is the essential relation between the sun, the sun's *tapas*, and the production of rain. For Vedic man, however, sun and rain are hardly rivals, as van Buitenen, for example, has incorrectly suggested.7 They certainly do not exclude each other. At *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 7 the sun, cosmogonically, begets the waters of creation. At *Taittiriya Samhita* 2, 4, 10, 2 Surya is referred to as a "lord of rain," and the ritual to generate rain is incomplete without an offering to the sun. *"Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 2, 1, 21 speaks of the sun's ray, which seeks out rain.8 More specifically, heat is essential for producing rain. In fact, without *tapas* there could be no rain at all. Although this requisite *tapas* may be generated through ritual and ascetic activity as we shall see below, at a natural level it is quite evidently again the sun's *tapas* which is crucial.

In addition to the sun, the *tapasvin* Agni9 (the fire) plays a crucial role in fertilizing the fields and producing rain. Not only is Agni continually characterized by *tapas*, he, even more than the sun, is explicitly equated with it. At *Atharva Veda* 12, 1, 20 the celestial Agni, like the sun, "heats forth from the sky" (*agnir diva a tapati*). *Rg Veda* 10, 88, 10 observes that Agni ripens plants of every form and nature. Heesterman has demonstrated that Agni, particularly as Agni Vaisvanara, is "essentially concerned with the process of fertility."10 Like the sun, Agni "presides over" the process of maturation and birth.11 As often indicated in the Brahmanas, Agni, in the primal time, entered into the waters.12 This "Agni-in-the-waters" constitutes one of his essential Vedic forms and very frequently has an atmospheric reference. Agni presides over and exists within the atmospheric and celestial oceans. As such, Agni is instrumental in the production of rain. *Rg Veda* 10, 98, 10 petitions Agni to send rain from heaven, to send down on us from the "air-ocean" a "mighty flood of waters." *Taittiriya Samhita* 2, 4, 10, 2, cited above, refers to Agni along with Surya as a lord of the rain, stating that when the appropriate sacrificial offerings have been made, "Agni causes the rain to arise."13 *Satapatha Brahmana* 5, 3, 5, 17 makes it explicitly clear that the rain is born of Agni's *tapas:*

> "Born of *tapas,"* he [the sacrificer] says, for from Agni springs smoke, from smoke the cloud, from the cloud rain,it is from Agni that these are produced: hence he says, "born of *tapas."*

Not only is Agni directly associated with the atmospheric waters and, therefore, with rain, but also with the heat and lightening which "impregnate" the rainwater, sending it on its way. *Vajasaneyi Samhita* 3, 12 notes that Agni "quickens" or stimulates the water's seed. Griffith rightly indicates in this context that "as lightening, Agni impregnates the waters of the air" and O'Flaherty shows how fire was perceived already in the Vedic world as liquid seed or semen. 14

The close correlation between *tapas* and rainfall may also be seen in the activity of the Asvins.15 These celestial twins, often associated with sun and fire, are also characterized by *tapas.* This is clearly seen when they "whip up" the rain, starting it on its way. Their "whip" in the *Rg Veda* is often compared to or identified with the fire or heat ($\sqrt{tap}$) of lightening.16 As Bergaigne demonstrates, the Asvins not only cross the waters of the sky, they make them flow.17 *Rg Veda* 1, 57, 5observes that they set the atmospheric waters in motion. Verse 8, 5, 21 notes that they cause the rivers of the sky to rain. They are called "lords of the (rain) drops" (1, 180, 1), and it is said that the clouds swell for the Asvins (1, 181, 1). The Asvins like Agni, then, "impregnate" the waters of the air, causing rain. The imagery of conception is significant here. As we shall detail below, it opens into a rich symbolic tapestry in which semen, rain, and sacrificial milk are interwoven and homologized.

Ascetic Heat: The *Brahmacarin*

Not only the *tapas* or heat of nature but also the *tapas* or heat of ascetic practice is often crucial in producing rain and fertilizing the fields. This is particularly evident in the ascetic "career" of the *brahmacarin*, or Vedic student. After being

initiated into Aryan society at the *Upanayana,* one entered the *brahmacarya asrama,* or first life-stage, assuming for up to twelve years the role of a *brahmacarin.* In fact, one could remain a *brahmacarin* for life, particularly in the centuries before the *asrama* system assumed its familiar four-stage form.18 The *brahmacarin* is clearly a *tapasvin. Atharva Veda* 11, 5, which glorifies the Vedic student in exaggerated fashion, notes, for example, that the *brahmacarin* protects the Brahmanic life with *tapas* (v. 10), filling the world with his asceticism (*tapas,* v. 14). The term *brahmacarya,*

which designates the entire student *asrama*, carries the central meaning of chastityor more precisely, the ascetic abstention from intercourse. *Brahmacarya* is one of the most conspicuous forms of *tapas* in the Veda. In fact, *tapas* and *brahmacarya* are often seen as identical. 19

In addition to this practice of *brahmacarya,* the *brahmacarin's* observance of other *vratas* (vows of austerity) indicates his concern with asceticism and the generation of *tapas.* Often the Vedic student must, for example, fast, remain isolated, remain silent, sleep on the ground, or not sleep at all. He must often control his breath (*pranayama*)for prolonged periods of time. *Atharva Veda* 10, 7, 11 notes that the *vrata* or ascetic vow is maintained by *tapas.* One Grhya Sutra states that the *brahmacarin* "should be addicted to *tapas"* while observing a *vrata.*20 It is precisely the accumulation of *tapas* or heat by means of such *vratas,* particularly *brahmacarya,* which made the *brahmacarin* a bearer of particular potency capable of exercising an evident control over the forces of nature. Hauer observed that the *brahmacarin* controls the elements, generates rain, and effects the fertility of the fields through his *tapas.*21This fertilizing and life-sustaining heat generated through asceticism can frequently be seen as the voluntary equivalent of the natural heat generated by the sun and fire.

In the post-Vedic period the *Mahabharata* contains many illustrations of how *tapas-laden* ascetics generate rain and fertility.22 Already in the Veda, however, the *brahmacarin* through *tapas,* particularly *brahmacarya*, is seen as a reservoir of fecundating power. Through chastity, the Vedic student accumulated sexual power which could be discharged to effect rainfall and fertility. In this context it is appropriate to consider the *Mahavrata* rite.23 A *brahmacarin*, "saturated" with *tapas,* and a prostitute (*pumscalí*)exchange verbal abuse as a part of the ritual. The harlot accuses the *brahmacarin* of violating his vow of chastity. The *brahmacarin* responds by reviling the *pumscalí* for her sexual activity. Gonda observes in this context that "there can be no doubt about the general purpose of this altercation: the mutual insult is offered 'for fertility purposes.' Sexual abuse, smutty talk, insinuations suggesting cohabitation or debauchery and allusions to sexual life in the human sphere are a frequent and widespread means of promoting the fertility of the soil and fecundity in general."24 After this altercation the prostitute had ritual intercourse with a (man from) Magadha. Von Schröder argued that it was the *brahmacarin* who originally had sexual intercourse with the woman, and Eliade very clearly recognizes the *brahmacarin* as the *pumscali's* sexual partner.25 So also, Gonda is clear that a *brahmacarin* and a prostitute have intercourse.26

Given the ritual's concern with fertility, the presence of the prostitute is

not difficult to comprehend. Comparative studies have made clear the great "solidarity between women and agriculture, between female fertility and the fecundity of the soil, between cohabitation and fertilization." 27 Quoting Gonda: "It follows as a logical consequence that the more unrestrained the sexual intercourse, the more effective it is considered to be . . . " In view of the perceived relation between the female and the fertile soil, he further states that "prostitutes are . . . from a religious point of view valuable members of the community.28 Particularly significant in the present context is the participation of the *brahmacarin* who has generated *tapas* through *brahmacarya.* He, like the prostitute, is a reservoir of energy and power. Unlike the prostitute, however, he is such precisely because of his sexual abstinence which has generated *tapas.* This reservoir of power is now released, resulting in the fertility of nature. It is, I believe, in this context that the otherwise enigmatic remarks of *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 12 may be understood. The verse speaks of the *tapas-laden brahmacarin* who fertilizes the earth with his semen. O'Flaherty has drawn attention to the many examples in Hindu mythology of "unilateral creation," stating: "The male seed is fertile in itself, particularly the seed of a great ascetic who has kept it within him for a long time and is therefore, 'one whose seed is never shed in vain.' "29I believe we can see this later Hindu theme prefigured here in the almost mythical *brahmacarin* of the *Atharva Veda.* Already in this text a maxim implicitly emerges which will have great force in later Hindu thought: the longer seed is retained, the more potent

it becomes.

The *brahmacarin's* ability to generate rain and fecundity is often the result of ascetic practice joined with magical endeavor. To generate rain, for example, the *mahanamni* verses are intoned. In preparation for the study of these verses, however, the *brahmacarin* must observe the *Sakvari Vrata* lasting one to twelve years. During this period, in addition to generating *tapas* by means of the practices articulated above, the student must wear dark clothes and eat dark food.30 The darkness of the clothing and food constitutes, I believe it safe to assume,31 a piece of homeopathic magic calculated to summon the dark rain clouds. As *Taittiriya Samhita* 2, 1, 8, 5 observes: "Black is the form of rain; verily by its form he wins rain." *Taittiriya Samhita* 2, 4, 9, 1 states: "He puts on a black garment with a black fringe; that is the hue of rain; verily becoming of like hue he causes Parjanya (i.e., the Vedic rain-god) to rain." Shortly after enumerating the various *tapas*-generating observances required of the student, another text states: "If he practices these duties, Parjanya will send rain according to his [i.e., the *brahmacarin's*]wish."32 Perhaps the most distinctive form of ascetic self-denial associated with the *Sakvari Vrata* is the prohibition upon the

brahmacarin to seek shelter from the rain at any time. 33 Oldenberg suggests that by ascetically subjecting himself to the rain, the *brahmacarin* ultimately attains a certain power over it.34 Relatedly, *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 2, 9, 23, 6 states: "Thus are praised those who keep the *vrata* of *brahmacarya.* Now they accomplish their wishes merely by conceiving them. For instance, the desire to procure rain."35

Ritual Heat

The Diksita-yajamana

Rainfall and fecundity are two frequently-cited objectives of the sacrificial endeavor.36 The ritual generates rain and insures fertility. One of the most pervasive and crucial of all Vedic identities, however, is that established between the sacrificer (*yajamana*)on the one hand and the sacrifice (*yajña*)on the other. The complexities and implications of this homology will be explored below.37 Suffice it to say that given this identity, it is the consecrated sacrificer (*diksita-yajamana*)himself who generates the rain and insures the fertile fields. This he does through his accumulated *tapas.* He is, in fact, like the *brahmacarin*, saturated with *tapas* as a consequence of his ascetic activity. This was already observed by Oldenberg, who understood *tapas* in this context to be a mystical substance or fluid which permeates the ascetic's body, lending it a "magical power."38 This saturation with *tapas* extends into the hair, into the beard,39 into the fingernails.40 The ascetic's entire being courses with *tapas.* It is precisely for this reason that both the *brahmacarin* and the *diksita* were prohibited from cutting the hair,41 the beard, or the nails. Such an act would clearly result in a loss of *tapas.*42 Relatedly, one must remain dusty43 and not bathe for prolonged periods.44 Such bathing would wash away both the accumulated *tapas* and the related potency.45 It is, in fact, the specific purpose of the baths which conclude both the *brahmacarya asrama* and the sacrificial scenario to remove the accumulated *tapas.* At this time also the hair, the beard, and the nails are cut.

It is the accumulated *tapas* of the *diksita-yajamana* which issues in rainfall and fertility. In this context it is interesting to consider the ritual treatment of the sacrificer's hair. Regardless of how long the sacrificial scenario may extend, the *diksita* is prohibited from cutting his hair until the final bath (*Avabhrtha*) which, as noted, serves as a ritual exit from the sacrificial process. The uncut hair, as stated, contains *tapas* to its very ends.46 In the Vedic as in the archaic mind, however, the hair was also perceived to be a form of "procreative life substance."47 The close association between the hair and

the forces of fertility becomes clear in the ritual. Quoting Heesterman: "The growth and shaving of the hair are equal to the periodic process of the growth and fading of vegetation, and to the cyclical fertility process in general." 48 The growth of the hair is homologized with, and magically linked to, plant growth and the ripening of earthly fruits. In this context, Heesterman cites *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 17, which states that by *brahmacarya* and *tapas* the king protects his realm. He then states in his discussion of the *Rajasuya* (Sacrifice of Royal Consecration): "Now *brahmacarya* and *tapas*

seem exactly to be the purport of the observances to which the king is subject during the year preceding the hair-cutting festival. By these observances, the most important of which is the interdiction to have his hair cut, the king protects the realm, that is: he *enacts the universal fertility process and secures its safe issue."*[49]This observation by Heesterman is, I believe, applicable not only to the king but also to the *yajamana* in general.

The connection between the *tapas-laden* hair and fertility is also evident in the "domestic" texts (Grhya Sutras), which specify that the hair shorn after ascetic periods is to be deposited at specific places[50] associated with fertility. Heesterman observes that the disposal of hair clippings in this way "seems to reveal the concern for giving them a place in the fertility process so as not to loose the vital force inherent in them."[51] That force is clearly *tapas.*

Tapas at the ritual generates not only fertility but rainfall as well. Already in the *Rg Veda,* an homology or correspondence was established between the drops of sweat which developed upon the sacrificial participant as he performed in the heat of the sacrificial fire and the drops of rain generated by heat in the atmosphere.[52] The heat emitted by the sacrificial fire, the sweat of the sacrificer or priest, and the heat of the atmosphere which generates the rain are all referred to by the term *tapas.* Placing fuel upon the fire and increasing its *tapas* results in a heightened state of *tapas* for the priest[53] or sacrificer as evidenced, for example, by *Rg Veda* 4, 2, 6, where Agni is addressed:

> *yas ta idhmam jabharat sisvidano*
> *murdhanam va tatapate tvaya*
> *bhuvas tasya svatavanh payur agne*
>
> He who carries fuel for you, sweating, or who heats his head because of (devotion to) you, do you be his self-strong protector, O Agni.[54]

There is a suggested correspondence here and elsewhere[55] between the heat of "devotional fervor"[56] and sweat. The term *tapas* is applicable in both cases. Sweat is both an external manifestation of *tapas* and a form of *tapas* itself.[57]

From a Vedic perspective this ritual sweat may be seen as generated by both the natural heat (i.e., *tapas*)of the fire and the ascetic heat (i.e., *tapas*)of austerity and devotion.

The homology between rain and sweat is evidenced paradigmatically by the Maruts (storm gods). The Maruts, "lords of the rain," [58] like a troop of warriors drive the rain onward. *Rg Veda* 5, 58, 7, for example, is addressed to them:

> *vatan hy asvan dhury ayuyujre*
> *varsam svedam cakrire rudriyasah*
>
> When the sons of Rudra (i.e., Maruts), yoked their wind-horses to the shaft, they made (their) sweat rain.[59]

In order for the Maruts to generate rain, however, they need heat *(tapas)*,[60]just as the ritual performer requires heat to generate the rain-homologue, sweat. Again, no sharp line can be drawn between the ritual-ascetic heat which produces sweat, and the natural, atmospheric heat which generates rain.

The Pravargya

The most elaborate illustration in Vedic literature of how *tapas* generates both rain and fertility is found at the *Pravargya.* In fact, virtually every conceptual thread thus far presented finds its interwoven culmination in a discussion of this ritual. The *Pravargya,* a hot milk offering to the Asvins, has its rudimentary beginnings in the *Rg Veda* and *Atharva Veda* and receives complex elaboration in the Brahmanas and Srauta literature. Central to the rite in the *Rg Veda* is the heating ($\sqrt{tap}$) of the cauldron (*gharma*) containing the milk. This cauldron is appropriately termed the *tapta-gharma.*[61]Its heating takes place in the morning and corresponds to, indeed, contributes to the rising sun's increasing heat. Likewise, the hot milk, also referred to as the *gharma,* is seen as a homologue of the sun's heat.[62] The sun heats the *gharma-vessel,* yet is in turn heated by it. *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 5 indicates that by "putting on the *gharma,"* the sun rose by means of *tapas (. . .gharmam. vasanas tapasodatisthat. . .).*[63] It is, however, also the *tapas* of Agni that heats the cauldron. This is clear at*Atharva Veda* 11, 1, 16: "Agni, the sacrificial vessel climbed upon you. Heat it with *tapas* . . . " The *gharma-pot* may, however, also be seen as heated by the ritual asceticism and devotion of the sacrificial participants.

This is particularly true of the *adhvaryu* (priest) who is heated in proximity to the fire as is the cauldron itself.

The mythical paradigms for the ritual found in the *Rg Veda* clarify why the offering is made to the Asvins. These fragmentary paradigms also explain the continuing role of the Asvins in the rite. The most painstaking, extensive, and plausible translation and interpretation of these mythical and paradigmatic fragments have been offered by Blair. 64 His interpretation, quite rightly, suggests that the mythical seer (*rsi*)Atri was performing the ritual, but hostile forces prevented its successful conclusion. The *gharma* was not heated; the sun did not rise. In desperation, Atri cried to the Asvins, who quickly brought heat (*tapas*)to Atri's *gharma*, thereby rescuing him and the sun from darkness.

As suggested, the heating of the *gharma* homeopathically heats the sun, facilitating its ascent. As early as the *Rg Veda*, however, the heating of the *gharma* also had as its objective the production of rain. These two concerns are related. The milk (*gharma*)within the vessel (*gharma*)is "whipped up by the Asvins just as they whip up the rain drops in the sky. And just as the liquid is poured out (or boils over) so does the nourishing and fertilizing rain come down."65 The sacrificial participants, however, particularly the *adhvaryu*, generate heat (*tapas*)by three distinct yet interrelated means: (1) ascetic effort, (2) ritual devotion, and (3) proximity to the fire. This heat produces sweat which is in turn homologized with both the raindrops and the overflowing liquid of the *gharma*. Interrelatedly, it is *tapas* that generates the sweat, the boiling liquid, and the rain.

The *Pravargya* becomes an ever more elaborate ritual in the later Vedic literature. According to the Srauta Sutras, it is usually performed twice a day during the three day long *Upasad* ceremony. These days of asceticism constitute an integral part of the sacrificial scenario. Relatedly, both the performing priest and the sacrificer must first undergo a special *diksa*, or consecration, lasting one full year and consisting of evident ascetic and tapas-generating activities. Although the rite remains a hot ($\sqrt{tap}$) milk offering to the Asvins, significant additions emerge. Perhaps most important is the introduction of an iconic element in the form of the *Mahavira* or "Large Man," an anthropomorphic form of the earlier *gharma-vessel*. The homology between the *Mahavira* and the sacrificer is far clearer and more explicit than were any homologies between sacrificer or priest and the Rg Vedic *gharma*. As van Buitenen observes, the shape "unmistakably suggests the rough form of a man sitting crosslegged, the top corresponding to the head, the middle to the trunk, the base to the crossed legs."66 The later ritual once again seeks homeopathically to increase the *tapas* of the sun. The homology established between the sun and the *Mahavira-gharma*, however, now becomes explicit.67 At

Satapatha Brahmana 14, 1, 3, 17, the following words are recited while the *Mahavira-pot* is heated:

> "Flame thou art, glow thou art, *tapas* thou art;" for the *Gharma* is he who shines yonder [i.e., the sun].

The *Mahavira-gharma* is heated to a red-hot glow as is the sun. So hot, in fact, is the *Mahavira* that it is handled always with a special set of tongs.

Despite the views of van Buitenen, 68 it appears clear that the production of rain remains an essential objective of the developed *Pravargya*. Having partaken of the hot-milk offering, the Asvins are strengthened and can more easily cross the atmospheric waters and bring rain.69 The rite takes place at the beginning of the rainy season. As the *adhvaryu* pours milk into the *Mahavira*, the following words are recited: *"Svaha!* I pour thee for the sun's ray which seeks out rain."70 Significantly, *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 3, 2, 22 makes the homology between the flowing *gharma-milk* and the flowing rain explicit:

> The *Pravargya*, indeed, is the year: . . . when it [the *Pravargya-pot]* is placed on the fire then it is spring; when it is burning-hot then it is summer; *when it is flowing over then it is the rainy season;but*, indeed, when the rains overflow, all the gods and all beings subsist thereon; and, verily, the rains overflow for him who thus knows this.71

Even van Buitenen, who repeatedly fails to note the correlation between the *Pravargya* and the production of rain, is compelled to state: "When the sun finally re-emerges . . . after the rainy season, it is the time of the ripening of the crops

and their harvesting. Earth has been fecundated with the rains and by whom but the Sun himself."72

The manner in which the *Pravargya* generates not only rain but also fertility becomes explicit in the Srauta literature. The rite often has as its aim the fecundity of the sacrificer and his wife to the end of producing offspring. This is clear in that the only words normally spoken by the sacrificer's wife at the *Pravargya* are:

> A fecund woman shall lie with thee. Fertile, bearing the seed, may she give you a man-child . . .73

But no sharp line can be drawn between the virility of the sacrificer and the fecundity of the earth. Van Buitenen has drawn attention to the "impressive masculinity of the Large Man and his fertility."74 The *Mahavira* is looked

upon as the "father of creation." 75 The procreative dimension of the *Mahdvira-vessel* is further accentuated by the semi-phallic shape. It is simultaneously man and *linga* (phallus). When the *adhvaryu* lifts the linga-vessel he states: "Arise, be big, stand high, stand firm!"76

The hot milk which overflows the heated (√tap) *linga-vessel* is thus a homologue of semen, and the act of overflowing, an orgasm of creation.77 Supporting this contention are the words of van Buitenen: "The *Mahavira* with its semi-human, but also semi-phallic shape, its round cap with a small receptacle from which a narrow channel runs down to its base, filled with hot [√tap]white liquid that overflows, might well be viewed as the male member of creation overflowing with semen."78 *Satapatha Brahmana* 12, 4, 1, 7 equates milk and fertilizing seed. At *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 3, 1, 22, the *adhvaryu* "builds" the *Mahavira*, part by part, including the "two testicles [which] he gives to it, for by means of his testicles the male overflows."

The homology or equivalence of milk and semen expressed at the *Pravargya* deserves particular attention in the light of O'Flaherty's discussion of these two fluids which are often regarded as "complementary opposites" in Indian thought.79 Although O'Flaherty does not discuss the *Pravargya* in this context, her observations prove intriguing when applied to the ritual. Whereas semen is the quintessential male fluid in both the Vedic and postVedic periods, milk is the quintessential female fluid.80 The union of these two "life principles"81 in the same figure invariably bespeaks androgynous power. Thus, for example, Parjanya, the Vedic rain-god, is perceived as androgynous in that his "waters" are regarded as both milk and semen.82 So too the androgynous Prajapati generates both semen and milk83 as does Indra in the *Mahabharata*.84 O'Flaherty's efforts to uncover "the beginnings of androgyny"and, therewith, the "potential for unilateral creation"-in Indian thought85 may well be illuminated by considering the *Pravargya*. Although van Buitenen drew attention to the "impressive masculinity of the Large Man," observing that he was the "father of creation," there appears to be a very clear androgynous dimension to the *Mahavira*. He combines in himself the essential male and female fluids of semen and milk; he is therefore capable of "unilateral creation." One could, in fact, trace the androgynous dimension of the *Mahavira* back to the *gharma-pot* of the early Veda. A pot, as O'Flaherty herself indicates, is a womb-homologue or substitute.86 The *gharma-womb*, therefore, contains within itself the fluid seed of fecundity.

Not only may the *gharma-milk* be symbolically equated with semen, however, but also, as stated, with rain. Archaic thought often expresses a correspondence between rain and semen, a connection central to the *hieros gamos* or "divine marriage" between heaven and earth. Should any of the

gharma-milk spill accidentally, the following words should immediately be recited, no doubt so the spilt milk will not be wasted:

> Heaven has impregnated earth, the young bull has impregnated the cows. All these worlds have been impregnated . . . From the spilt semen the bull is born. From the spilt semen may we procreate. 87

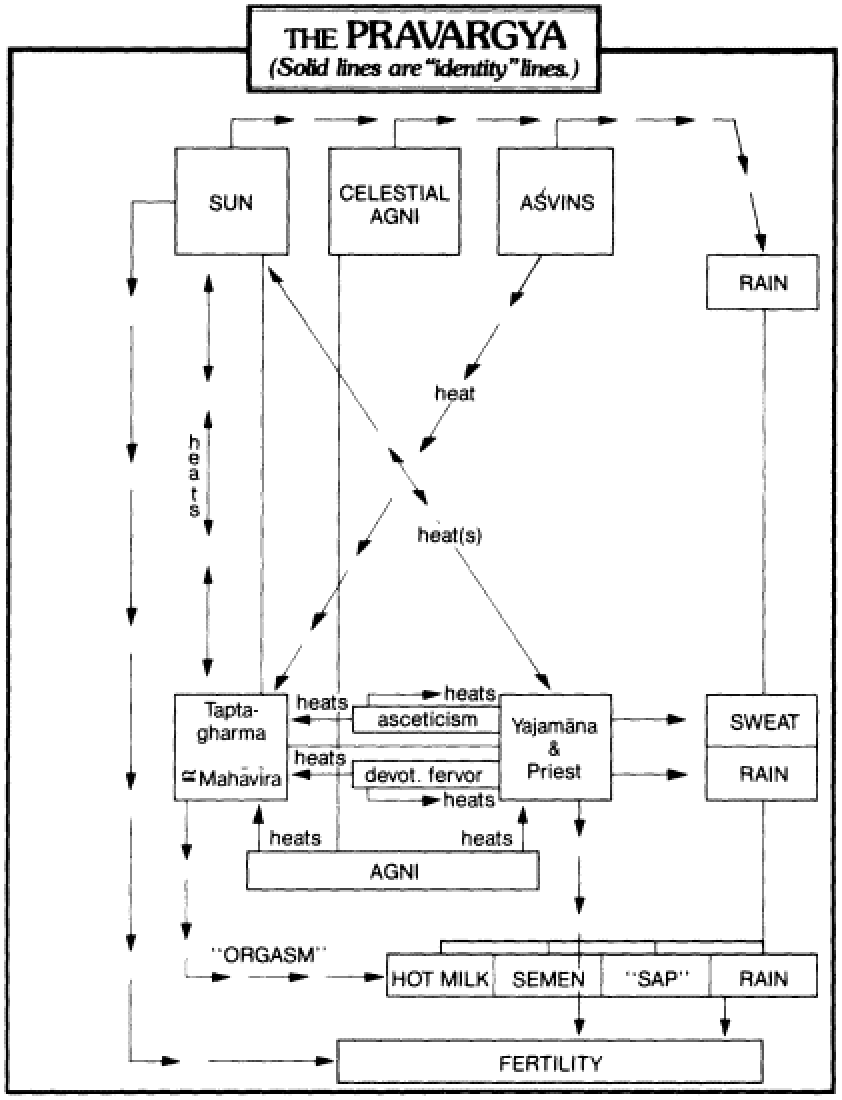
Joined to the semen/rain/milk complex is the mythical "sap" or lifeblood of the sacrifice. Paradigmatically, the sap flowed from the ritual. As a consequence, plants grew up.88 That sap, equated with *tapas*89 and the *gharma*,90is now returned or "restored" to the sacrifice with the creation of the icon-pot. Recalling the symbolic identity of sweat and rain,

we see drawn together and homologized five elements: sweat, rain, semen, heated milk (*gharma*), and sap. These five interrelated elements are generated through *tapas* and, in turn, eventuate in fertility and rainfall.

We have often suggested that no sharp line can be drawn between the "natural" forms of *tapas* and the *tapas* of asceticism which clearly accompanies the ritual. In this context it is significant that asceticism at the *Pravargya* is particularly conspicuous. This is true for two reasons. The rite, as noted, takes place during the three *Upasad* days, or "ascetic sieges," which are calculated to increase the *tapas* (ascetic heat) of the sacrificer,91 and as indicated, a special ascetic consecration (*Avantaradiksa*)of one year precedes the rite.92 The *diksita* commits himself to a specific *vrata* or ascetic vow93 which he fulfills for one year under the supervision of a teacher. His studenthood is accentuated by the teacher's words: "Thou art a *brahmacarin.* 94Like the *brahmacarin,* he must think of himself as a *tapasvin.* In addition to the regular *Diksa* observances, he often spends his nights in silence, standing or sitting, but not lying down.95 He fasts on moon-phase days; he should not eat at night; he may not bathe. Further, he must have no contact with a woman as part of his *tapas-generating* endeavor. This is significant, for it demonstrates again, as we saw in the case of the *brahmacarin* above, the correlation between abstinence and fertility. Just as the *brahmacarin* becomes a reservoir of sexual capacity because of his asceticism, so too does the *diksita-yajamana* at the *Pravargya.* And just as the *brahmacarin's* reservoir, when released, issues in fecundity, so too does that of the *diksita* here, as is evidenced by the aims of the *Pravargya.* The *tapas* of the diksita-sacrificer is increased, however, not only through his asceticism, but also though natural heat. We have already observed his proximity to the sacrificial fire. During the consecration he must also continually expose himself to the heat of the sun, with which he is explicitly

equated. *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 1, 33 even prescribes that he be totally uncovered so that nothing comes between his person and the sun.

In the course of the *Pravargya* then, the *Mahavira-gharma-vessel,* the sacrificer himself, and the sun are symbolically equated with each other. Further, these three are simultaneously heated. These three, however, in turn generate heat which issues in the homologue-complex: sweat, rain, semen, heated milk, sap. The final outcome of all is rainfall and fertility.



Two
Tapas, Birth, and Spiritual Rebirth

As demonstrated at the *Pravargya*, no sharp line can be drawn in the Vedic world between the fecundity of the earth and the fertility of man. As a consequence, human procreation may be seen as one aspect of cosmic creation. It is not surprising, therefore, that an intimate, in fact, a causal relationship exists between *tapas* and birth. Exploring this relationship, however, opens an immense arena of Vedic thought and practicea realm of religious significance which far exceeds the concern with rainfall and fertile fields.

Although the notion of 'heat' is central, the Sanskrit root *tap*, as articulated, assumes various convergent and divergent meanings in Vedic literature. Several denotations and connotations of the noun *tapas* emerged in the preceding chapter: the natural heat emitted by the sun and fire; the 'heated effort' of asceticism; the 'heated potency' which is the product of that ascetic effort; the heat of devotional 'fervor.' *Tapas*, however, refers also to the natural heat associated with procreation, including biological conception and embryonic maturation. The heat of sexual desire, the heat of sexual excitation, and the heat generated during sexual intercourse may all be rendered by the word *tapas*. In a related context, that heat generated by a hen as she broods upon her eggs, the "hatching heat" necessary for birth, is also rendered by the noun *tapas*.

Other significant connotations of √*tap* could be enumerated here. That, however, is not our present concern. Our objective is rather to demonstrate the relation of *tapas* to birth and, relatedly, spiritual rebirth at two interrelated levels: the mythical, cosmogonic, and paradigmatic level on the one hand and the ritual level on the other. The complexities of these interrelations, although later summarized, need not be anticipated here. It is, however, appropriate to

suggest, in simplified form, a thesis integral to our discussion: Although the specific connotations of *tapas* and √*tap*-derivatives may vary from context to context, there is a clear correlation, indeed a causal relation between *tapas* and biological procreation. It is also observable in Vedic literature that symbols of spiritual rebirth frequently take as their model biological birth from an embryonic condition. The embryonic condition is, in fact, the most conspicuous prerequisite for spiritual rebirth. Rebirth symbolism is, therefore, continually "transparent" to a natural, biological model. We therefore suggest that *tapas* plays an essential role in spiritual rebirth just as it plays an essential role in biological birth; and this is the case largely because spiritual rebirth often remains "transparent" to the biological model. We have observed the various forms of 'natural' heat which the word *tapas* may suggest. *Tapas,* when employed for spiritual rebirth, however, is not a 'natural' heat. It is rather a voluntary, self-imposed asceticism. Relatedly, the heat produced is not a natural, but rather a magico-ascetic heat. This difference is not surprising. Spiritual rebirth, as opposed to biological procreation, is not a 'natural' event, but rather an event calculated to overcome or transcend the natural condition.

Tapas and Procreation

The correlation between *tapas* and procreation is evident in various Vedic compounds and coordinations of the root *tap* and the root *jan, jan* meaning essentially "to generate," "to beget," "to be born," most evidently in the biological sense. 1 For example, the compound *tapojan* ("born of *tapas"*)is found frequently in the Brahmanas.2 In a Rg Vedic verse3 the *rsis* (mythical seers) are said to be *tapojan.* Also in the *Atharva Veda* we find the *rsis* and their descendants "born from *tapas"* (*tapaso 'dhijatan*).4 In the *Atharva Veda,* all-the-gods (*visvedevas*)are described as *"tapas-born"* (*tapojas*).5 Examples could easily be multiplied.6 Mention might also be made in this context of the coordination of the root *tap* and *sam-*√*bhū*, the latter prefixed root meaning also "to be born," "to come into being."7 Thus, in a verse of the *Atharva Veda,* the people were born from, or were generated from the sun's *tapas* (*tapasah sambabhuvur*).8

On the cosmogonic level *tapas* invariably constitutes an essential agent in Prajapati's generation of living beings. For example: "Verily, in the beginning, Prajapati alone existed here. He thought within himself, 'How can I be propagated? He toiled [√*śram*, "to weary oneself"] and practiced *tapas* [*tapo 'tapyata,* "heated himself"]. He created living beings."9 Creatures thus issue or are born from Prajapati "wearied" (√*śram*)and "heated"(√*tap*).10In the

Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana, "Prajapati was desirous to have progeny. He performed *tapas."* He having done this, the world of living creatures is generated from him. 11 The correlation between *tapas* and generation in the figure of Prajapati need not be further detailed here.12 It should be stressed, however, that, becoming heated with or by means of *tapas,* Prajapati becomes pregnant with creatures or creation and subsequently emits (√*srj*.) them from his "womb."13 The root *srj* is here used in the sense of "to give birth to" or "to generate," as is the prefixed root *nir-*√*mā* *when* used in this context.14 To translate *tapas* in the cosmogonic contexts cited above simply as "austerity," "penance," "asceticism," or "mortification," as is often done, is inadequate and frequently misleading in that such translations fail to reflect the connotations of sexual heat which are implied. Such an implication is present in the case of Prajapati, given his bisexual nature, even when no specific act of intercourse with "another" is referred to, although it often is.15

The relation of *tapas* and sexual heat, often suggested in the figure of Prajapati, is evident in other and varied contexts. It is expressed in the association of *tapas* with notions of love, desire, and lust, these three emotions often rendered in Sanskrit by the word *kama.*16 Cosmogonically and paradigmatically, Putrakama, the personified "desire for projeny" is born of and spread through *tapas* in *Rg Veda* 10, 183, *1* .17As Knipe points out, *tapas* may therefore be seen as a force of mystical sexuality "manifest in the cosmos." It is evidenced "in the bodies of women, in plants, and in all beings. "18 A

mantra of the *Atharva Veda* calculated to win or compel a man's love relates: "Love's longing, together with yearning, . . . that do I kindle for thee [*tam te tapami*]. . . " 19 Desire is generated by derivatives of √tap In *Atharva Veda* 11, 8, 2, it is *tapas* which is explicitly referred to as the "groomsmen" and the "wooers."20 In the *Taittiriya Samhita*, desire *(kama)* is homologized with the *tapas-possessing* fires.21 In the cosmogonic hymn of *Rg Veda* 10, 129, 4, *kama*, or desire, arises from *tapas*, and the next verse indicates the resultant act of sexual intercourse: "Seminal powers made fertile mighty forces. Below was strength [i.e., the female], and over it was impulse [i.e., the male]."22

The Vedic texts are even more explicit in demonstrating *tapas* as the heat generating and generated by the sexual act which issues in biological birth. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 5, 3, 16 states: "When woman and man become heated [*sam-tapyate*], the seed flows, and thereupon birth takes place."23 The symbolism used during the *Agnicayana* (the ritual building of the fire altar) conveys a similar import: "The fire-pan is a female, and the fire is a male; hence when the male heats [*sam*-√*tap*]the female, he infuses seed into her."24 An Atharva Vedic verse (4, 4, 3) concerned specifically with the

promotion of virility reads: "This herb shall make thee so very full of lusty strength, that thou shalt, when thou art excited, exhale heat as a thing on fire;" or: ". . . exhale as if heated up [*abhi-tap-tam ivanati]."* 25 Blair suggests that despite some obscurity here, what is involved is a simile "apparently intended to compare a thing heated *[abhi-tap-tam]* with a person sexually excited."26

Another, yet related image found in the Veda linking *tapas* and sexual generation is that of the kindling or churning process. Such kindling or churning (√*manth* or √*math*)is invariably characterized by the root *tap* or a derivative. Thus the *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana* observes that fire issues from *tapas* and that birth (√*jan*) issues from the churned *(mathitat),* from the thoroughly heated *(samtaptat).*27This churning of the two sticks, which is simultaneously a tapas-generating process, is frequently seen as a heated sexual interaction yielding birth. As the *Satapatha Brahmana* makes clear, to be heated and to be born are virtually synonymous.28

Agni is frequently seen as an agent of sexual generation. This is significant in that Agni, as noted, is a great *tapasvin;* he is, in fact, frequently equated with *tapas.*29 In the *Taittiriya Samhita,* Agni, as he who burns, is described as the generative organ.30 The correlation of *tapas* and Agni and the further correlation of this pair with procreation is clearly seen in this same text when it notes with reference to the cosmogony that: "The gods said to Prajapati, 'Let us have offspring.' He said, *'As I have created you by tapas, so seek ye offspring in tapas.' He gave to them Agni* as a support, saying 'Strive with that support.' *"*31Then they produced. In *Rg Veda* 10, 187, a hymn which explicitly notes that offspring are bestowed by *tapas*, Agni declares: "In all existent beings I have deposited the germ of increase, all progeny on earth have I engendered, and the sons of women who will be hereafter."32 Agni, as a *tapasvin,* is associated with the sexual impulse, the heat of passion, the heated genitals, and the sexual process in general.

Although it may not be considered 'sexual heat' in the most evident sense, we must also consider the use of *tapas* or √*tap* -derivatives which suggest the heat required for the creation, maturation, and subsequent hatching of an egg, the hatching that issues in birth. In a passage from the Upanisads, Hiranyagarbha, the golden embryo, often equivalent to Prajapati himself, is described as *tapaso jatam* ("born from *tapas"*).33 Often in the Brahmanas, this embryo, or *garbha,* comes into being as a consequence of the primal waters desiring (*kama*)to propagate and then 'heating' (√*tap*)themselves.34 Not only does the heat of *tapas* bring the *garbha*, or egg, into being, however, but once generated it must be further heated in order for it to issue in birth (or second birth). Edgerton therefore observes that the word *tapas* in

certain contexts "undoubtedly suggests the creative warmth that is symbolized by the brooding of a bird over its eggs. Notions of the development of the universe out of a cosmic egg appear not infrequently in early Hindu cosmogonies, and with it is clearly associated belief in *tapas,* warmth, as a force of cosmic evolution." 35 Winternitz suggests the same when he notes that it is appropriate to think of *tapas* in these contexts as "hatching heat. "36 Deussen has observed that "[as] early as the creation myths [of the *Rg Veda*]the creator of the universe prepared himself for his work by the practice

of *tapas;* in which word the ancient idea of 'heat' which serves to promote the incubation of the egg of the universe blends with the ideas of exertion, fatigue, and self-renunciation."37

Tapas and Spiritual Rebirth

In the Veda, symbols of initiation and, relatedly, spiritual rebirth are very frequently transparent to the model of biological birth. This in itself is not surprising. What is noteworthy in the Veda is the clarity and detail of the rebirth symbolism and the evident influence of the biological model. Rebirth symbolism of this kind has been observed by a number of Vedic scholars and need not be elaborated for its own sake in any great detail.38 A few examples are, however, appropriate.

Upanayana is synonymous with initiation in Vedic India. It is through this *samskara* or initiatory sacrament that one enters the Aryan social structure. According to the Hindu law books the *Upanayana,* as noted, begins the first *asrama,* or stage of life, that of the *brahmacarin.* The rebirth symbolism is clear. *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 3, states: "When the teacher receives [*upa-ni*]the *brahmacarin* as a disciple, he places him as a fetus inside (of his body). He carries him for three nights in his belly."39As other passages explicitly indicate, these three nights are a clear homologue of the gestation year which the embryo undergoes prior to its birth.40 *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 5, 4, 12 observes that "by laying his right hand on (the pupil), the teacher becomes pregnant (with him)." The same text also states that the *Savitri* verse of the *Rg Veda-the* first bit of knowledge that the *brahmacarin* receives-should not be taught to him for a year because "children, indeed, are born after being fashioned for a year. Thus we lay speech into this one as soon as he has been born."41 The *Satapatha Brahmana* also indicates that "he who enters on a term of studentship becomes an embryo. "42 A Dharma Sutra states that the teacher causes the pupil to be born a second time by (imparting to him) the sacred learning.43 On this basis one who has experienced the *Upanayana* is a *dvi-ja,* a "twice-born."44

At the heart of Vedic orthodoxy stands the sacrifice. Its variations are detailed with precision in the Brahamanas and the Srauta literature. Despite all variation, however, the *Diksa,* or "consecration," invariably constitutes the initiatory entrance into the sacrificial scenario. At this initiatory consecration the *diksita* is placed in a hut in which he spends most of his time. The hut symbolizes the womb in which he as an embryo is placed. *Aitareya Brahmana* observes: "The hut of the *diksita* is the womb of the *diksita;* verily thus they [i.e., the priests] conduct him to his own womb." 45 While in the womblike hut, the *diksita* "walks along the back of the *Ahavaniya* and the front of the *Garhapatya* fire. The reason why this is his passage until the Soma pressing is this. The fire is the womb of the sacrifice and the *diksita* is an embryo, and the embryo moves about within the womb. And since he (i.e., the sacrificer) moves about there (between the fires), and now turns round and now back, therefore these embryos move about, and now turn round and now back."46 Assuming an embryonic condition constitutes a prerequisite for the eventual and desired rebirth of the *diksita-yajamana.*

Tapas*, Asceticism, and the Symbolic Embryo*

It is at the *Diksa* that the sacrificer assumes an embryonic condition in preparation for his spiritual rebirth. The *Diksa* and, therewith, that embryonic condition are made possible through *tapas.* The correlations of *tapas* and *diksa* are numerous in the Vedic literature,47 as, for example, at *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 1, 1, where the waters of the initiatory bath both contain and *impart diksa* and *tapas.*48 More significantly, however, the *Diksa* came into being through *tapas* at the cosmogonic or paradigmatic level: "Prajapati practiced *tapas.* From the body of him when heated [$\sqrt{tap}$]the *Diksa* was produced."49 *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 10,6, 5 notes that the sacrificer grasps the *Diksa* (and hence, relatedly, the embryonic condition) with *tapas. Tapas* as ascetic activity is clearly evident in the various self-imposed austerities which the person desiring spiritual rebirth must undergo. These include seclusion, fasting, and chastity. In each case, the ascetic observance is transparent to a natural model.

The passage cited above describing the *diksita's* constant movement between the fires within the hut is significant in this context. The fires generate heat. In fact the fire, as noted, is frequently equated with *tapas.* The *diksita*-embryo is thus heated in the womb-hut by *tapas,* 'maturing' in preparation for its eventual rebirth. The symbolism here appears transparent to the biological dimension of *tapas* as the heat requisite for the 'incubation' of an embryo or the 'hatching' of an egg. The *diksita* is covered with a garment. "The garment is the caul *(ulba)* of the *diksita;* verily thus they cover him with a caul.

Above that is the black antelope skin; the placenta *(jarayu)* is above the caul; verily thus they cover him with the placenta." 50 Significantly, this garment which 'heats' the *diksita* is placed upon him with the mantra: "Thou art the covering of *diksa* and *tapas."*51 *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 10, 6, 5 has the sacrificer accept this garment with the mantra: *Diksasi tapaso yonih* (You are the consecration, *the womb oftapas).*52 Significantly then, the *diksita* through a 'heated effort,' through a *voluntary* asceticism (e.g., confinement to the hut and its attendant conditions) 'heats' himself ascetically; but this heat is transparent to the 'natural' heat or *tapas* requisite for the maturation of an embryo.

Relatedly, *Satapatha Brahmana* 9, 5, 1, 4 is explicit in observing that "the whole practice of *tapas* it is when one abstains from food."53 *Tapas* as ascetic behavior is again clearly instrumental in effecting rebirth. The texts, for example, state that one seeks immortality or rebirth through fasting.54 This voluntary *tapas* of fasting is, however, again transparent to biological generation. At *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 3, 1, 4, for example, the *diksita* fasts (voluntarily) in order to become an embryo again, but this is because "embryos live in the womb without taking food;" thus they live by fasting "involuntarily," that is, naturally. The ascetic dimension of *tapas* remains transparent to its natural ground.

Between the *Diksa* and the sacrifice as such lie the *Upasad* ceremonies. This ritual element further prepares the diksita for his coming rebirth. *Tapas* at the *Upasads* is conspicuous. The texts specifically assert that the *Upasads* are *tapas,*55 and there seems little question that as such they increase the *tapas* of the sacrificer in preparation for the building of the altar and for the performance of the sacrifice itself. This is particularly clear in that an intensified fasting constitutes the crux of the *Upasads.* As the text indicates: "Verily, the world is conquered by *tapas.* Now, this *tapas* becomes ever and ever wider [and thus] he conquers an ever and ever more glorious world. . . . Let him therefore undertake the *Upasads* that get narrower and narrower."56 This is to say, the fast-milk, which alone sustains the *diksita* during the rite, is milked from three teats on the first day, two on the second, and one on the third, thus progressively decreasing his intake and increasing his fast. *Satapatha Brahmana* 9, 5, 1, 2-9 states: "For *tapas* it is when, after becoming initiated, one lives on fast-milk." These *Upasads,* however, also suggest a very clear rebirth symbolism in that his living on milk takes place through three *Upasad* days which may be homologized with the gestation period of a year. That the three days are a homologue of the year is clear, for the text explicitly states: "Let him undertake three *Upasads,* for there being three seasons in the year, it is thereby made of the form of the year."57 The correlation of *tapas* and rebirth at the *Upasads* is particularly clear when the text says: "One should be

consecrated for twelve nights; the year consists of twelve months. . . . *He is born indeed who is born of tapas.* The twelve *Upasads* are the four sets of these three nights." 58

As a consequence of his *tapas* (i.e., ascetic practices), the sacrificer has generated *tapas* (i.e., ascetic heat) and now finds himself in a state of *tapas.* He is, as indicated, saturated with *tapas* to the tips of his beard, to the tips of his hair, to the tips of his nails. The ascetic effort of the sacrificer is as we have seen directly related to his establishing himself as an embryo in "incubation-preparation" for rebirth. But his ascetic observances are also a necessary precondition for building the altar and performing the sacrifice. It is, therefore, in a state of *tapas* that the sacrificer now "generates" the altar and immolates the victim, these two interrelated acts serving as the specific mechanism of his rebirth. As a text makes clear: Man is truly born, only when born out of the sacrifice.59 The *Taittiriya Samhita* states also that one is truly born (i.e., spiritually reborn) only when "full of *tapas."*60 The same text observes that the discarding of the embryonic covers takes place when the sacrificer is "full of *tapas.* "61 That he now is. The establishment of the sacrificer as an embryo becomes, however, even more evident with the building of the fire altar. Relatedly, his heated condition increases during this process.

The Altar, the Embryo, the Second-Self

The speculations of the Samhitas and Brahmanas regarding the ritual find their most complex and subtle expression in the *Satapatha Brahmana's* description of the *Agnicayana,* the ritual building or "piling" (√ci) of the Vedic fire altar. As Eggeling rightly observes, there was a clear tendency in the Brahmanas of exalting the *Agnicayana,* allowing it to eclipse the entire sacrificial ceremonial.62

The description of the ritual building process begins with a mythological account of creation itself. This is appropriate, for the creation myth is the paradigmatic model for the creation of the fire altar. Thus, according to *Satapatha Brahmana 6*, 1, 1, 1, Prajapatithe mythological personification of the sacrifice itselfis generated through the *tapas* of the *rsis*, or mythical seers, who are here equated with the "non-existent" of the Beginning. Having come into existence through *tapas*, Prajapati then generates all reality from himself. This he does through his own practice of *tapas*. Through *tapas* Prajapati generates all the gods and all creatures. In particular, however, Prajapati generates Agni as a *'second-self.'* Agni, as the sacrificial fire, frequently represents the sacrifice as a whole. It is appropriate then that Agni should be seen as the second-self of Prajapati, for Prajapati is himself the

sacrifice. We have said that Prajapati, through his *tapas*, generates Agni as a second-self. 63 We could, however, also say that Prajapati generates himself, or is reborn out of himself, in the form of Agni. At *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 6, 5, 2 we read that Prajapati "wearied himself, and the glow and essence of him thus wearied and heated [√*tap*] developed into Agni [i.e., the sacrifice]."64 This notion of Prajapati generating Agni as a second-self is related to other passages in which the androgynous Prajapati generates a second-self as embryo within himself by practicing *tapas* and then, after one year, gives birth to that second-self in an act of unilateral creation.

The mythological paradigm for the *Agnicayana* continues: Having generated all reality through *tapas*, Prajapati became "relaxed," or more literally, "he fell asunder," "he became disjointed;" "his joints fell apart (*visrasta, vi-*√*srans*)." Being thus disjointed, Prajapati calls upon Agni to "restore" him or "put him together" (*sam-*√*kr*). According to the mythical paradigm, the reconstitution of Prajapati is seen as the building up of Prajapati in the form of a sacrificial altar. As the *Satapatha Brahmana* observes: "That Prajapati who became relaxed [i.e., became disjointed; fell asunder] is this very altar which is here built."65 Agni is, in this context, regarded as the second-self of Prajapati because he mythically "reconstituted" Prajapati. But ritually Agni reconstitutes Prajapati precisely because he (Agni) is the altar. In the actual ritual, however, it is the *sacrificer* who is equated with Agni; hence it is the sacrificer who reconstitutes Prajapati. This he does by building the altar which is Agni, which is the second-self of Prajapati. By building the altar the sacrificer rebuilds or reconstitutes Prajapati, whose complete reconstitution is the completed Agni-altar. This is what is meant when the text states that Prajapati is this very Agni-altar who is now built (ritually by the sacrificer).66 Prajapati, as Agni, is reborn through the building of the altar. This is evidenced by the fact that the building is to take place in one year, which is presented as the gestation period.67 At the *Agnicayana*, however, it is the sacrificer himself who is homologized with Agni, with the altar, and with Prajapati. The sacrificer hence not only effects the rebirth of Prajapati-Agni through his building of the altar but is himself the very self to be reborn at the completion of that altar. *Agni, the altar, is hence the embryonic self of the sacrificer and that symbolic embryo is fashioned by the sacrificer himself.* 68

That Agni, and hence the sacrificer who is explicitly equated with Agni, is regarded as an embryo is evidenced by the prevalence of womb symbolism which reenforces the image of rebirth. Agni, who in the early stage of the scenario is personified not as the altar as a whole but only as a lump of clay which shall form an integral part of that altar, is seen as entering and residing

in various wombs. Reminiscent of the sacrificer's own *Diksa*, the Agni-lumpof-clay is deposited in an enclosed hut: "The sacrificer now encloses him within this stronghold . . . and again this is a womb. . . . " 69 Eventually, however, a fire-pan is made for the Agni-lump-of-clay.70 The fire-pan into which Agni is placed is requested to "bear Agni in her womb, even as a mother bears her son in her lap."71 What is significant is that the sacrificer is himself regarded as this embryo within the womb ("The sacrificer is Agni.").72 But even more significantly, the fire-pan is also homologized with the sacrificer.73 *The sacrificer hence bears himself as an embryo!*

That the sacrificer "bears" Agni, and hence himself, in his own womb is graphically illustrated during the special *Diksa* appropriate to the *Agnicayana* which begins one week after the fashioning of the fire-pan. Although it shares many similarities with the classic *Diksa* described above, it is also unique to the *Agnicayana*. The *Diksa* takes place for an entire year, a homologue of the gestation period. There is no need to reiterate here all the tapas-generating activities (e.g.,

fasting, seclusion) that the sacrificer must undergo. What is characteristic of the *Agnicayana Diksa* is that for a period each day throughout this "gestation" year the sacrificer must carry or "bear" Agni in the firepan. The Agni he bears, however, is now not merely a lump of clay but the flaming Agni. The *tapas* of the sacrificer who bears himself as embryo is thus reenforced by the heat of the fire which is the embryonic sacrificer himself. The *tapas* generated at the original *Diksa* is now heightened through further asceticism and inseparably linked to the embryonic condition requisite for birth. Just as all birth took place through the mythical and paradigmatic *tapas* of the androgynous Prajapati, so now the spiritual rebirth of the sacrificer at the ritual is prepared for by his own practice of *tapas.*

When the altar is completed a Soma Sacrifice is performed as an integral part of the *Agnicayana.* Still in a state of *tapas* by means of the original *Diksa*-observances of the *Agnicayana*, the sacrificer strengthens that state through yet another *Diksa*, the *Diksa* which precedes the Soma Sacrifice proper. The sacrificer hence increases his *tapas* and reaffirms his embryonic condition. "Ascetic seiges" are once again sustained. These *Upasads* generate even more *tapas:* "The *Upasads* . . . are the *tapas* in the sacrifice, for they are indeed *tapas."*74 A special altar is built for the performance of these particular *Upasads.* This altar is specifically termed *tapascita*, "built (or piled) in *tapas."* These particular *Upasads* last a full year, a homologue of the gestation year, thus perfectly coordinating *tapas* and rebirth. It is further explicit that during this year of *tapas-laden* and tapas-generating *Upasads* the sacrificer "builds for himself a body."75

We have observed some of the specific forms of *tapas* practiced by the

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diksita-yajamana such as heated seclusion and fasting, demonstrating also the "transparency" of these actions to a natural model. The most significant observance of the *diksita-yajamana* is, however, *brahmacarya*, that is, the ascetic abstention from sexual intercourse. *Brahmacarya* is one of the most conspicuous forms of *tapas* 76 and must be observed by the sacrificer henceforth from the *Diksa. Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 4, 4, 4 urges not only *tapas* in general but specifically *brahmacarya*, for he who practices the latter will be spiritually reborn and attain immortality. Already at *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 19, the paradigmatic model is provided by the gods who overcame death (a symbol of rebirth and immortality) by means of *brahmacarya.*

Brahmacarya illustrates again how ascetic acts needed for spiritual rebirth remain transparent to a natural, biological model of conception and birth. This can be strikingly demonstrated by briefly considering the most prevalent Vedic notion regarding biological conception. As I have demonstrated at length in a previous article,77 this Vedic notion differs dramatically from the modern perspective. O'Flaherty has observed that the Veda offers various theories of conception.78 I contend, however, that one predominates. Simply stated, Vedic man did not regard the embryo, the fetus, the prenatal organism to be the product of a fertilization process taking place within the female. Quite to the contrary, the embryo, or *garbha*, begins its "career" within the male; it is only later *transferred* to the female womb. The Vedic *samskara* (sacrament) of conception is, in fact, termed the *garbhadhana*, the "placing of the embryo" (into the female); the mantras that accompany the rite continually emphasize that the embryo, the prenatal organism, exists first and preeminently within the male.79 But even more significantly, at the natural, biological level the embryo is perceived as a second-self of the father, existing already within him.80 The *Atharva Veda* observes that "the male is born out of the male,"81 and the *Chandogya Upanisad* states that the male "procreates himself."82

When the texts do not speak of the embryo that is transferred from the male into the female womb, they invariably speak of *retas* (sperm, semen, seed) which is transferred into the female womb during intercourse. But very often this seed or *retas* is already regarded as the child to be born. The fact that seed is often perceived as the actual person to be born allows for the virtual equation of seed and embryo, *retas* and *garbha. Aitareya Upanisad* 2, 4, 1 states: "In the self [i.e., the male self] one bears a self." As the text makes clear, he then pours *himself* as semen into the woman." *She nourishes this self of his that has come to her."*83

That *brahmacarya* (as an ascetic observance necessary for spiritual rebirth) remains transparent to a biological model is demonstrated in the "do-

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mestic" literature (Grhya Sutras). These texts require three days and nights of chastitya clear homologue of the gestation

yearprior to intercourse at the *garbhadhana*, the placing of the embryo into the female womb. The embryo must therefore "mature" within the male for a requisite "gestation" period. Violation of *brahmacarya* would constitute a premature dissipation of the maturing embryo. 84 The need for *brahmacarya* at the ritual is then directly related to the fact that an embryo is being symbolically fashioned by the *diksita* himself. During the sacrificial scenario, as we have seen, the *diksita* fashions his second-self, which when completed or born will constitute his spiritual rebirth. Through his *tapas* and *brahmacarya* the *diksita* symbolically sustains the embryo, heats the embryo, and matures the embryo which he is or, more correctly, which is his second-self to be reborn. Because the sacrificer bears and matures himself as an embryo the practice of *brahmacarya* is crucial. A violation of *brahmacarya* would constitute a *premature* dissipation, destruction, or abortion of that symbolic embryo. In this context, the ritual literature is comprehensible when it observes that during the building of the altar (i.e., the creation of a second-self) one should not have intercourse with any woman for "in that he piles the fire [altar], he deposits seed; if he were to have intercourse he would be deprived of seed. "85

The term *garbha* refers not only to a fetus or an embryo, however. It refers also to the "interior of anything"86 and therefore, specifically, to a womb. *Garbha* may refer then to both womb and embryo. This is significant in the present context, for we have stated throughout that the *diksita* bears himself as embryo. As *"garbha"* he is simultaneously embryo and womb. Significantly, he bears himself as embryo and gives birth to himself as embryo just as did the paradigmatic and androgynous Prajapati.

Male seed, even without benefit of female contribution, is fertile87 and semen or seed retained increases in potency. It is capable of producing rain and fertilizing fields. Yet it is also capable of generating spiritual rebirth and immortality. The *yajamana* is capable of unilateral creation at many levels just as is his paradigm, Prajapati. The implication is surprising but clear: The *yajamana* has an unmistakably androgynous quality. Everything we have said points to this conclusion and the "identity" of the *yajamana* and Prajapati lends further confirmation. We are reminded here also of the identity or homology of the *yajamana* and the androgynous *Mahdvira* at the *Pravargya. I* suggest, therefore, that already here in the figure of the Vedic *yajamana* who bears himself as embryo and generates himself unilaterally we find a foreshadowing of the "pregnant ascetic," the "pregnant yogi" of a later period whothrough retention of semenbecomes clearly androgynous.88

Tapas*, Sacrifice, Rebirth*

Having performed the requisite ascetic preliminaries (e.g., *Diksa, Upasads)* to the sacrifice as described above, the sacrificer now finds himself in both a state of *tapas* and an embryonic condition prior to his rebirth at the sacrifice per se. The actual sacrifice, performed in a state of *tapas*, will now generate the sacrificer from itself, he thus being spiritually reborn. It is important to remember, however, that the sacrificer is repeatedly homologized or equated with the sacrifice, and hence it is again the sacrificer himself, having thus far borne himself as an embryo, who now generates himself in an act of spiritual rebirth.

Man's rebirth out of the sacrifice is most clearly evidenced in the statement concerning man's three births: "Verily, man is born thrice, namely in this way: first he is born from his mother and father; and when he . . . performs offering he is born a second time; and when he dies, and they place him on the fire, and when he thereupon comes into existence again, he is born a third time." 89 Man is truly born only by being reborn out of the sacrifice. As *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana* 3, 14, 8 observes: "Verily unborn is man in so far as he does not sacrifice. It is through the sacrifice that he is born."

The particular manner in which man is reborn out of the sacrifice has been the subject of numerous inquiries and need not be presented here.90 We will discuss it from a particular perspective below.91 Suffice it to say that at the sacrifice, the slaying of the animal (or the pressing of the Soma) on earth is equivalent to its rebirth in heaven and therefore constitutes the rebirth of the sacrificer, this because the sacrificer is explicitly homologized with the victim which is reborn. What is crucial for our purposes is the fact that the *tapas*-laden sacrificer is homologized with the sacrifice itself, thus effecting his own spiritual rebirth. For the present it is more instructive to consider the dynamics of death and rebirth at the funeral sacrifice or "final offering" *(Antyesti)*. The *Satapatha Brahmana* states that "man is born thrice."92 The first of these births is one's natural birth; the second birth is out of the sacrifice; "and when he dies and they place him on the fire, and when he thereupon comes into existence again, he is born a third time."93 Man's rebirth to immortality which is effected through the sacrifice is properly culminated and realized only at death when he sheds his corporeal and worldly form.94 In this sense rebirth at the funeral is not distinct from, but is, rather, in vital continuity with, the entire sacrificial

structure. This is clearly indicated when the *Satapatha Brahmana* states:

> For an *Agnicit* (builder of the fire-altar) one makes a tomb after the manner of the fire-altar; for when a sacrificer builds a fire-altar he thereby constructs for himself by sacrifice a (new) body for yonder world; but that sacrificial performance is not complete until the making of a tomb; and when he makes the tomb of the *Agnicit* after the manner of the fire-altar, it is thereby he completes the *Agnicitya.* 95

As Brian K. Smith reminds us: "Man's divinity (his *daiva atman)* is forged by the ontological power of ritual work; his heavenly world is also made by sacrificial labor, both the heaven reached in every successful sacrifice and the heaven to which the sacrificer finally attains after death. "96

Death and funeral are, however, not only the culmination of the sacrificial scenario, but also the culmination of the initiatory scenario as well. It is precisely Agni, as the cremation fire, who supplies the corpse with *tapas* and thus facilitates his ascent to heaven.97 Indeed, in the Vedic texts Agni not only imparts *tapas* but, as noted, is often equated with *tapas.*98 In *Atharva Veda* 18, 4, 9, which is a funeral hymn, Agni, as the cremation fire, is asked to impart *tapas* to the corpse and thus establish him in the world of heaven. *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 4, 8 explicitly observes that the (dead) sacrificer is born again out of the fire when the fire consumes his body (through its *tapas*). Just as the sacrificer through his *tapas* had given birth to Agni at the *Agnicayana*, so now the fire through its *tapas* gives birth to the sacrificer at the funeral. "Then he [the dead sacrificer] is reproduced from out of the fire; and he (Agni) who heretofore was his son now becomes his father."99 This is the import of Agni's request to the sacrificer at the *Agnicayana:* "As thou wilt reproduce and maintain me in this world, even so will I reproduce and maintain you in yonder world."100 The heat of *tapas* clearly has a transforming power. As Uma Vesci points out, that which is cold (*amah*)and unheated is inert and unable to move.101 The *tapas* of Agni grants the deceased a "power to rise" just as it granted the sacrificial victim and the Soma a similar power.102 Vesci observes that cremation appears to be a strange practice for a people "who aspire to some kind of corporeal life" in the beyond.103 The interesting issue, however, is exactly *how* 'corporeal' the divine self or *daiva atman* was perceived to be. The texts are hardly consistent here, sometimes suggesting that man cannot become immortal as long as he has a body (*sarira*),104 sometimes speaking of the "splendid body" (*tanu suvarcas*)105 which awaits man in the beyond. Suffice it to say here that the consuming heat of the funeral fire is often double-edged. It is not only consuming but also *and essentially* transforming. Certainly in the early Veda, the emphasis is not on the funeral fire's destructive power but rather on its 'reproductive' and transforming power.106

Not only does the *tapas* of Agni facilitate the rebirth-ascent of the corpse, however, but more particularly this *tapas* explicitly protects and defends the deceased on his journey to heaven. 107 Paradigmatically, both the *rsis* (primordial seers) and the *pitrs* (primordial "fathers") reached the heavenly world through *tapas.*108They will now be joined by the departed who is also described as "born of *tapas"* (*tapojan*)in heaven.109 The final 'initiation' at the funeral sacrifice is clearly and quite literally a 'heated ($\sqrt{tap}$)passage.' However, as demonstrated, all initiatory scenarios may and must be described as heated passages (i.e., *tapta-marga*)simply because they take place in a state of *tapas* and are *facilitated by tapas* in a form that is either natural, ascetic, or devotional.

Drawing together in abbreviated fashion the mythical and ritual dimensions of our discussion we discover that:

1. Mythically, cosmogonically, and paradigmatically Prajapati comes into being through *tapas.*

2. Mythically, cosmogonically, and paradigmatically Prajapati effects biological birth through *tapas.*

3. Both mythically and ritually, the sacrifice, which is Prajapati, effects biological generation through *tapas* in that it is performed in a state of *tapas.*

4. Prajapati generates a second-self from himself through his practice of *tapas.*

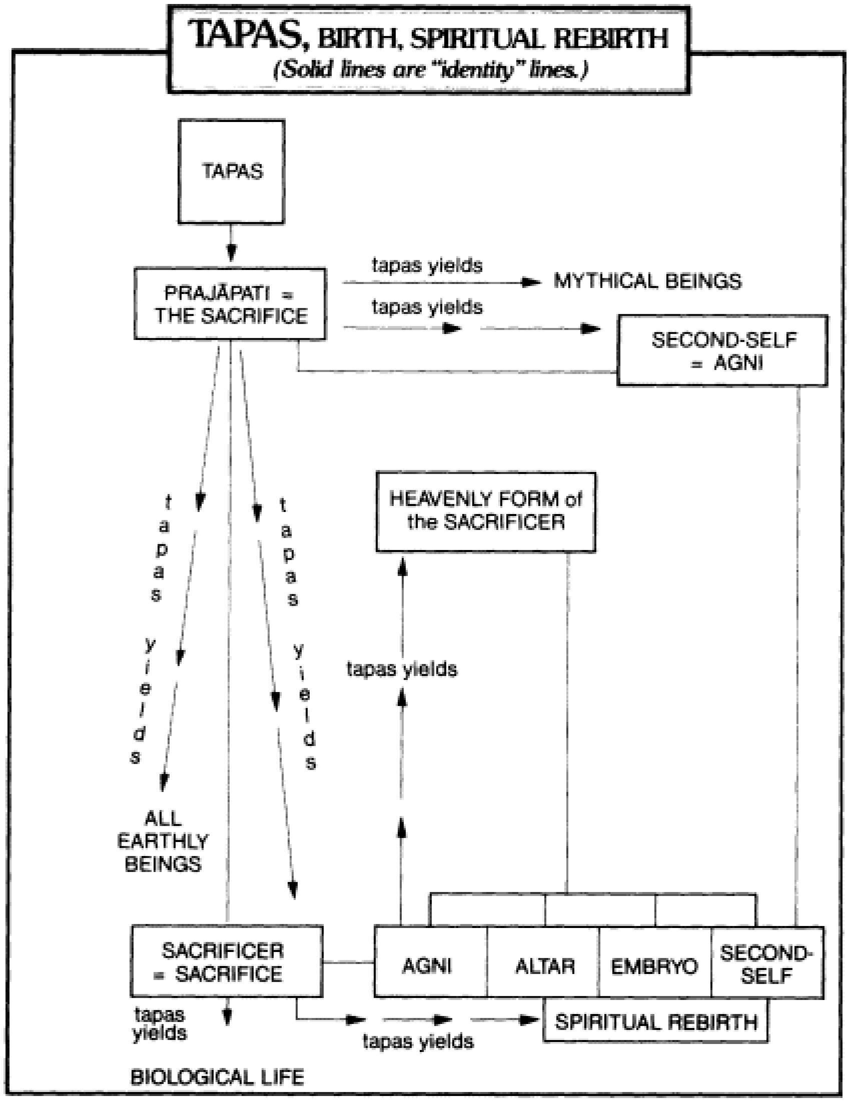
5. The sacrifice facilitates the generation of a second-self for the sacrificer or his spiritual rebirth when performed in a

state of *tapas*.

6. The sacrificer, homologized with Prajapati and the sacrifice, generates himself as embryo from himself in a state of *tapas*, thus effecting his spiritual rebirth.110

7. Man's final birth, his literal rebirth to immortality in heaven, is directly effected through *tapas*.

Needless to say, in this summary *tapas* carries, where applicable, the multiple and interrelated meanings discussed throughout. Despite Uma Vesci's failure to articulate the multiple dimensions of *tapas*,111her bold assertion may well be justified: "*Tapas* is the essence of the sacrifice and therefore of all Reality, whether divine, human or terrestrial, which unfolds from the sacrifice."112



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Tapas and Purification

Ritual acts of purification are plentiful, essential, and varied in Vedic religion. And it is invariably *tapas* that is crucial in all such purifying efforts. As demonstrated, the Sanskrit root *tap* assumes numerous meanings in Vedic literature, yet the denotation of 'heat' is always central. As illustrated, this heat is very frequently creative, life-generating, and life-sustaining. It generates biologically and regenerates spiritually. *Tapas* is not only a creative force, however; it is also destructive. It is a heat that injures, that causes pain, and that consumes. Although the creative and destructive aspects of *tapas* are often interrelated, 1 it is the specifically destructive power of *tapas* that claims our initial and primary attention when investigating purification in Vedic India.

Tapas: Destructive Heat and Purification

Among the connotations of the Sanskrit root *tap* are "to consume or destroy by heat" and "to injure [with heat]."2 Connotations of injury and consuming destruction are, in fact, the most prevalent meanings of the root *tap* and tap-derivatives in the *Rg Veda*. Examples in which deities are invoked to injure and destroy enemies by means of *tapas*, *tapus*, or $\sqrt{tap}$-action are multiple.3 *Rg Veda* 3, 18, 2, for example, states:

> Do you, Agni, injure with heat *[$\sqrt{tap}$]* the unfriendly among us; do you injure with heat [$\sqrt{tap}$] the ritual purpose of the grudging outsider who would do us harm: do you, the very pious, injure the impious with heat [$\sqrt{tap}$*]*. . . 4

Rg Veda 6, 22, 8, a hymn to Indra, states: "Injure them [i.e., those who hate us] with that [$\sqrt{tap}$], *O* bull, on every side with flame. . . " 5

Although a number of Rg Vedic deities are invoked to generate a destructive $\sqrt{tap}$-action against enemies, it is not surprising that Agni is called upon more than any other deity. In fact, of the thirty-nine Rg Vedic phrases in which an injurious heat-action is taken, nineteen cite the god Agni as the agent of such action.6 Agni, as the fire, destroys or consumes through *tapas*. *Rg Veda* 6, 5, 4 observes: "Whatever outsider would do us harm, O Agni, . . him with your ageless flames do you injure with heat, *you who have heat, O most hot* (*tapa tapistha tapasa tapasvan*)."7 *Tapas* and $\sqrt{tap}$ action, as this verse makes clear, are essential to Agni's very nature. He is *tapistha*, "most hot." At *Rg Veda* 8, 3, 1 Agni is described as "heatheaded" (*tapurmurdha*)and at 8, 23, 4 as "heat-toothed" (*tapurjambhasya*). As indicated, Agni is a *tapasvin*, one possessed of and characterized by *tapas*. But the $\sqrt{tap}$-action of Agni is clearly double-edged; it may be creative warmth as we have demonstrated. But as here illustrated, it is also destructive flame. This ruinous, consuming heat of Agni is thus one side of his *tapas*-laden and *tapas-generating* nature.

Although the god Agni is frequently invoked to generate a destructive *tapas*, certain hymns of the *Rg Veda* intimate that man himself may generate such a heat. On the basis of several Rg Vedic passages Blair has suggested that "the heat of the sacrificer himself was projected by magic off into space to strike down the enemy wherever he might be."8 This view is further substantiated if one considers the *Atharva Veda*, where not only a creative but also a destructive *tapas* is generated by man himself. For example, at *Atharva Veda* 5, 18 the priest pursues the insulter of the gods with *tapas* and wrath *(anuhaya tapasa manyuna cota durad ava bhindanty enam*, verse 9). The priest's teeth, covered with *tapas*, are used to pierce the enemy (. . . *dantas tapasabhidigdhah*, verse 8).

Although a destructive $\sqrt{tap}$-action is generated against a variety of enemies in the *Rg Veda*9 it is most often directed against the *raksasas*, a group of demons or evil spirits. For example, at *Rg Veda* 2, 23, 14 the *raksasas* are injured with "sharpest heating."10 At *Rg Veda* 4, 4, 1 Agni is asked to "pierce the *raksasas* with most hot (flames)"11 and at *Rg Veda* 8, 23, 14 Agni is again invoked to burn down these guilful demons with *tapas*.12Examples of a destructive $\sqrt{tap}$-action against the *raksasas* can also be found in the *Atharva Veda*. At 6, 32, 1 and 13, 3, 43 Agni is requested to injure the demons with his burning *tapas*.

The hymns of the *Rg Veda*, essentially concerned with praising specific deities, do not elaborate upon the exact relation between the demonic *raksasas*

and the sacrificial performance. Unquestionably, however, these demons were perceived to be a constant threat to the ritual. More significantly, the hymns do not detail the consequences of dispelling, injuring, or destroying the *raksasas.* In the ritual literature that follows the *Rg Veda,* however, these consequences become explicit. Simply stated, the expulsion of the *raksasas* is directly correlated with external purification of sacrificial objects and relatedly with the purification of the sacrificial procedure itself. In short, to overcome the *raksasas* is to purify; and unless purification takes place the sacrifice cannot succeed. 13 The correlation between expelling these demons and purification is particularly clear at the New and Full Moon Sacrifices. During the purifying consecration preceding the ritual the sacrificer receives a black antelope skin, which symbolizes the sacrifice itself.14 This antelope skin must be shaken for the explicit purpose of driving off the *raksasas,* who clearly are manifestations of impurity *(amedhya).*15

Significantly, the means of effecting external purification is very often a destructive *tapas. Taittiriya Samhita 5,* 1, 2 (1) observes that Agni, "waxing with *tapas,"* guards the sacrifice. This he invariably does through a destructive *tapas,* "burning out" or "scorching" the demons.16 The ritual objects are heated to simultaneously destroy the *raksasas* and purify these implements. The ladel and winnowing basket used at the sacrifice are, for example, heated with fire as is the dipping spoon in order to 'burn out' the demons.17 *Paryagnikarana* (the rite of carrying Agni around an object) is performed for purposes of purification. It renders a ritual object *medhya,* sacrificially pure.18 As a passage from the Brahmanas makes clear, however, this purification is correlated with an overcoming of the *raksasas:*

> He now carries fire round it. By this he encloses it [i.e., the object to be purified] with an unbroken fence, lest the evil spirits, the [Raksasas], should seize upon it; for Agni is the repeller of the [Raksasas]: this is the reason why he carries fire round it.19

Paradigmatically, the gods at the *Avantaradiksa,* a ritual of purification, assume the form of Agni, the lord of *tapas (tapaspati):* "'He verily is the greatest repeller of the *raksasas* among us; let us be like him'. . . . They accordingly became like Agni and thereby escaped from the *raksasas."*20This repelling of the *raksasas* is explicitly correlated with the process of purification.

Destructive *tapas* is thus correlated in the ritual literature with *external* purification of ritual objects. To drive away and destroy the *raksasas* is to purify ($\sqrt{p\bar{u}}$)and render an object "pure" (*medhya*)or "fit for a sacrifice."

Significantly, however, *tapas* comes to be seen as a means of purifying even when the threatening presence of the *raksasas* is no longer mentioned. The destructive heat of the fire purifies directly. When, for example, the Dharma Sutras speak of purification at sacrifices, they often note that objects are cleansed of impurity by being exposed to the flame of Agni and burned. 21 At this later stage of Vedic thought emphasis on purity increases whereas emphasis on the correlated expulsion of the *raksasas* decreases.

The destructive *tapas* of Agni purifies not only sacrificial objects, however. Increasingly Agni is regarded as capable of purifying the sacrificer himself. In this context we need no longer speak of an external purification, which may be easily correlated with overcoming the *raksasas,* but rather of a more psychological or internal purification. Agni destroys or removes not simply the evil demons but evil itself. Thus, for example, at *Vajasaneyi Samhita 5,* 36, Agni as *tapaspati* (the lord of *tapas*)is asked to remove *our* evil or "sin" (*papman*). Agni is capable of purifying the sacrificer because he himself is inherently pure. As early as *Rg Veda 3, 1,* 5 Agni is described as purifying by purification.22 At *Vajasaneyi Samhita* 26, 9 he is described as *pavamana,* "self-pure" and "purifying." At *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 1, 6 Agni Pavamana purifies the sacrificer.23 Relatedly, at *Rg Veda* 10, 16, 4-5 Agni is implored to remove the stains of evil deeds. His flames of heat are both pure and purifying.24

It is noteworthy, however, that references to Agni in the context of purification become progressively more symbolic and figurative. It is *tapas* of and in itself that comes to be seen as the power of purification. Just as the expulsion of the *raksasas* becomes less significant in the purifying process, so too does Agni as a literal, personified, and external force become less significant in the same context. Only the imagery of fire remains when the later law book of *Manu,* for example, observes: "Whatever evil [*enas*]men commit by thoughts, words, or deeds, that they speedily *burn away by tapas.* "25 Relatedly, a legal text says that "as cotton and reeds thrown into a fire blaze up, even so all guilt is *consumed* [

√tap]."26

Although there are, as suggested above, references in both the *Rg Veda* and the *Atharva Veda* to man himself being able to generate a destructive *tapas*, such destructive heatplaced at the service of purificationwas most frequently generated by the gods, particularly Agni, *on behalf of man.* This is particularly evident in the external purification of sacrificial objects. As emphasis progressively shifts, however, toward ritual purification of the individual, we witness a corresponding emphasis upon man himself being able to generate a destructive *tapas* for purposes of "consuming" his own impurity. *Tapas* then comes to assume its most prevalent meaning: self-imposed aus-

terity, asceticism, mortification, or penance. To better understand how this occurred, we must return to the *Rg Veda* and consider a rather different connotation of ¬ and *tapas.*

Tapas: Pain, Asceticism, and Purification

Among the connotations of the root *tap* is "to suffer or feel pain.*"* 27This is often the case in the *Rg Veda*. Relatedly, the word *tapas* must frequently be translated as "pain" or "suffering."28 In both the *Rg Veda* and the *Atharva Veda* such pain is most certainly undesirable as well as unpleasant. Such suffering may be either physical or mental. It may, for example, be the heat of disease in the body. At *Atharva Veda* 6, 20, 1 fever is characterized as "heatweaponed" *(tapurvadhaya).* Significantly, the heat may also refer to hunger. *Rg Veda* 1, 105, 8 (a) and (b) reads:

> *sam ma tapanty abhitah*
> *sapatnir iva parsavah*

Bloomfield translated these lines: "My ribs pain [√tap]me all about as co-wives plague (their husbands)."29 Blair has translated them: "My ribs heat me excessively [√tap] on all sides as co-wives (make miserable their husband)," noting perceptively that this "misery of the ribs" refers to hunger.30

The pain of heat within the body may also be somewhat more psychological. As Blair observes: "There are a comparatively large number of passages [in the *Rg Veda* and *Atharva Veda*]in which an emotion of strong unhappiness is considered to be heat or flame in the body, particularly in the heart."31 He further suggests that such unhappiness when it resides in the heart "is about equivalent to 'heart-ache.' " It is an "excessive heat of the body like jealousy and fever, to which it is closely related. "32 It is instructive to consider in this context the "Gambler's Hymn," *Rg Veda* 10, 34. In verse 10: "The gambler's wife, left alone [or lost by her husband in gambling33] is pained [√tap](with misery)."34 In verse 11: "It pained [√tap] the gambler (with remorse or jealousy) to see the woman, the wife of others and the well-arranged home."35 In verse 7 of the same hymn the words *tapanas,* "heating," and *tapayisnavas,* "causing great heat," are applied to the dice, they no doubt being the cause of all this pain. At verse 9 the gambler complains that these dice "burn out my heart (with anguish)." Examples of heat as undesirable pain may also be found in the *Atharva Veda.* At 2, 35, 2 the individual who has made an error in the sacrificial procedure is "heated with anguish." At *Atharva Veda* 16, 3, 6 the sacrificer prays that his heart may be

"free from excessive heating" (*asamtapam me hrdayam*). *Atharva Veda* 19, 28, 2 speaks of an unpleasant heat [√tap]produced in the mind [*manas*]and *Atharva Veda* 19, 30, 4 and 19, 28, 1-2 speak of an unpleasant heating or pain[√tap]in the heart.

The heat or *tapas* illustrated above is clearly undesirable. As either hunger, jealousy, or anguish it is a pain that is neither desirable nor self-induced. It is not a pain that is voluntarily generated by man. The *tapas* or √tap-action just discussed bears no relation to a desirable religious activity. Because it is a strictly undesirable and involuntary pain it can neither be regarded nor translated as "austerity," "asceticism," "mortification," or "penance." Although this pain of *tapas* is experienced within man it is not self-generated for purposes of knowledge, merit, purification or any other religiously

desirable end.

Most connotations of *tapas* and $\sqrt{tap}$-action found in the *Rg Veda* refer then to either a destructive heat or a painful heat. These connotations of *tapas*, although capable of overlapping, must be differentiated from each other. Pain, however, can be self-imposed. *Tapas* may therefore be self-generated. If we then reconsider the two early meanings of *tapas* with which we have here dealt, namely destructive heat and the heat of pain, one question becomes virtually unavoidable: Cannot *tapas* as the heat of a *self-imposed* pain "burn out," "consume," and destroy evil forces, evil, and ultimately impurity? Simply stated, cannot *tapas*, as self-imposed mortification, effect purification? The ritual literature suggests that this question be answered affirmatively.

The Brahmanas, as part of their extensive description and explanation regarding the nature and significance of sacrifice, lay heavy emphasis upon the need for purification. More specifically, the purification [$\sqrt{p\bar{u}}$)] of the sacrificer himself is crucial. Although actions calculated to purify and retain purity accompany the entire sacrificial scenario, it is at the *Diksa*, an elaborate and prolonged consecration, that the purity of the sacrificer is most evidently and comprehensively brought about. For this reason the *Diksa* stands at the beginning of the ritual process. Man is impure (*amedhya*)yet must become pure (*medhya*)in order to perform the sacrifice. 36 At the *Diksa* this transition from impure to pure is effected; at the *Diksa* man is purified (*pavayati*)37 and becomes "fit for a sacrifice" (*medhya*).38 *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 1, 2, 1 observes in this context: "All the gods who purified themselves for the sacrifice waxed great. He who knowing thus purifies himself for the sacrifice waxes great." Thus the sacrificer is "lead foreward, purified, to the world of the gods."

Purification at the *Diksa* is attained essentially through *tapas.* As early as

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the *Atharva Veda*, the terms *diksa* and *tapas* were frequently combined. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 4, 3, 2, explicitly equates the two. At the *Diksa* the sacrificer receives a garment. "He puts it round him, with the text, 'Thou art the covering [or form, *tanu*]of *diksa* and *tapas.'* " 39 *Vajasaneyi Samhita 4*, 2 states that the *diksita* rises up from the waters purified. He then addresses these waters as "the form of *diksa* and *tapas."* These waters remove impurity.40 Not only are the two words frequently paired,41 but even more significantly, the *Diksa*, as stated, came into being through *tapas* at the cosmogonic or paradigmatic level.42 Relatedly, waters used to purify are described as "born of *tapas. "*43It is through *tapas* that the *Diksa* and hence ritual purification come into being.

The word *tapas* as used above must be translated as asceticism, as self-imposed austerity. This is, in fact, the most prevalent meaning of *tapas* in the Brahmanas. The meaning of *tapas* as ascetic or heated effort may be clearly seen in its repeated correlation with the root *sram*, "to toil," "to weary one's self," "to exert one's self."44 Just as Prajapati exerted himself to become pure and cleanse himself of impurity,45 so at the *Diksa* the sacrificer exerts himself through asceticism, through *tapas*, to become pure. Further, the *diksita*, through his self-imposed "mortification,"46 his self-imposed suffering and pain, generates an inner heat, which is also referred to as *tapas*. Through the heat of exertion, asceticism, mortification, and pain he generates a heat (*tapas*)that raises him above the impure human condition, enabling him to perform the sacrifice. It is, I believe, *in part* because the word *tapas*, as early as the *Rg Veda*, had had the connotation of pain that this very word could now so easily be applied to that self-generated pain and mortification which is synonymous with ascetic activity. The meaning of *tapas* as asceticism, as mortification, as self-imposed pain, found so frequently in the Brahmanas and later, hence remains transparent to its "earlier"47 meaning of undesirable pain experienced within the body. *Tapas* as a pain once undesirable and religiously insignificant "becomes"47 *tapas* as religiously significant and necessary "pain."

Not only is the word *tapas* (meaning asceticism) transparent to the earlier meaning of painful heat, however; it is also transparent to the early connotation of destructive heat. At the Diksa the "human" condition, the sacrificer's impure condition, is overcome. More specifically and graphically, it is "consumed" or "burnt out" ($\sqrt{tap}$) in the heat (*tapas*)of asceticism. Strictly speaking, man as man cannot perform the sacrifice. Only a god can do so. It is for this reason that man must put off his human form and assume a divine form at the *Diksa*. As the texts repeatedly state: "What is human is inauspicious at the sacrifice."48 The consecration preceding the New and Full

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Moon Sacrifices, which structurally fulfills the same purpose as the *Diksa* preceding the Soma Sacrifice, is also characterized by asceticism. In this context, *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 1, 1, 6 makes it clear that "in entering upon the vow [of asceticism] he becomes, as it were, non-human." At the *Diksa* itself, *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 1, 1, 8 observes: "He who is consecrated . . .becomes one of the deities." 49 This transition from the human state to the divine is explicitly correlated with the transition from the impure to the pure.50 Because the human body is impure, a pure and therefore divine body *(devatasarira)* is necessary.51 Because it is impure the human body must be consumed symbolically through the heat of asceticism in order that a requisite purity-correlated with a divine state-may be attained.52 Once again, the word *tapas* (as asceticism) can easily convey this sense of a symbolic "consuming" of the "human" body precisely because of its "earlier" meaning of a destructive heat which consumes in the literal sense. Quite graphically, *Taittiriya Samhita* 7, 4, 9, 1 notes that "one kindles oneself with the *Diksa."* As Gonda observes in this context: "Being kindled through the *Diksa,* [the body] is enveloped by flames."53 During the *Diksa* the sacrificer also offers a libation into the fire. This sacrificial offering is the symbolic equivalent of the sacrificer himself, as the texts make clear.54 *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 1, 4, 5 also indicates that the *diksita* who practices *tapas* is a sacrificial oblation to the gods.

At the *Diksa,* then, the sacrificer symbolically leaves the human realm and attains the realm of the gods so that, as a god, he may perform the sacrifice. There is then a direct correlation between his symbolic death to the impure human condition and his symbolically attaining a heavenly realm. *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 4, 4, 4 observes that he who practices *tapas* will enter the heavenly world. Once again, the ascetic heat that effects this transition is transparent to the "earlier," more literal notion of the destructive *tapas* of the fire (i.e., Agni) consuming the body and thereby transporting it to the heavenly realm and granting it life. *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 4, 8 reads: "And when he dies, and when they place him on the fire, then he is born (again) out of the fire, and the fire only consumes [$\sqrt{tap}$ his body." At the *Diksa*, however, both the death and the rebirth are symbolic. Not only is he reborn, but he is first "consumed" through a self-generated ascetic heat.

The word *tapas* (as asceticism) thus contains within it and combines the "earlier" and more literal connotations of both destructive heat and painful heat.55 Because pain is now self-generated through "mortification," the destructive power of *tapas* is also self-generated. *That destructive heat once generated by Agni outside of man and on behalf of man is now generated by and within man himself.* This is in part made possible by the fact that man

becomes temporarily a god at the *Diksa.* The mantras at the rite make it clear that the *diksita* exchanges persons with and becomes the god Agni. 56 *Taittiriya Samhita* 1, 2, 2, (d) states: "Agni, this body (or form, *tanu)* of mine be in thee; that body (or form, *tanu)* of thine be in me."57 In this context, however, it is precisely *tapas* that constitutes the "form" or "body" of Agni, for he is declared to be *tapaspati,* the lord of *tapas.* It is thus the *tapas* of the *diksita* himself that is crucial. As a consequence he may declare at the *Diksa* that he purifies himself.58

In the form of Agni the *diksita* fasts. Fasting is, of course, the practice of *tapas:* "For *tapas* it is when one abstains from food."59 The *diksita* experiences hunger. "His food consists of the [hot] fast-milk only."60 "For *tapas* it is when [one] lives on fast-milk only."61 Once again a transparency to a Rg Vedic connotation of *tapas* is evident. There the unwanted pain of hunger was rendered by the root *tap.* Here the self-imposed hunger is the *tapas* of a fast, of ascetic practice. Again pain is linked with destruction. For example, during the *Upasads,* which form part of the purifying preparation for the building of the fire altar *(Agnicayana),* the sacrificer fasts.62 During the fast the sacrificer's human and impure body is progressively diminished; it is "consumed" in the heat of *tapas* as a divine body is "built up" in the form of the altar itself, symbolically equated with the sacrificer. *Taittiriya Samhita* 7, 4, 9, I notes in this context that the sacrificer "cooks" himself with the *Upasads.* Progressively, the fasting destroys the hair, then the skin, then the blood, then the flesh, then the bones, then the marrow.63 The self is hence sacrificed and thereby one goes to the world of heaven.64 By means of his fast, his *tapas,* the sacrificer not only "cleanses and purifies the sacrificial vessels," he also "purifies himself within."65 Milk consumed during a fast purifies;66 *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 10, 14, 10 observes that when the *diksita* becomes lean, when there is no food left in him, when nothing separates his skin and his bones, then he is *medhya,* pure.

Tapas: Penance and Purification

Ritual Asceticism vs. Penance

At the *Diksa* man purifies himself through *tapas*, through ascetic activity. He overcomes or destroys his impure condition, moving from the impure to the pure. This transition is correlated with symbolically overcoming the human condition, temporarily attaining the heavenly world and becoming divine.67 Although the Brahmanas often observe that "what is human is inauspicious at the sacrifice," in general they stress not so much the negative

and undesirable aspects of the human condition but rather the positive and desirable aspects of a "divine" condition. 68 There are, however, limited but very definite references to the fact that the human conditionman's given condition per seis evil. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 2, 6, 13, when speaking of the ritual creation of a new, divine body for man, makes the following observation: "Even as a snake frees itself from its skin, so does he free himself from his mortal body, from *papman."* The presence of the word *papman*, here used to characterize man's mortal state, is significant. The connotation of evil is unavoidable. In symbolically freeing one's self from the mortal, human, and impure body one is thus simultaneously delivered from something evil. Relatedly, *tapas*, because it purifies, has the power to eliminate or destroy such evil. This is explicit at *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 4, 4, 13. The passages speak of Prajapati, the major paradigm in the Brahmanas for all human activity. Prajapati was overcome by *papman*, by evil, here again equated with mortality. He thus "practiced *tapas* for a thousand years, striving to leave evil *[papman]* behind him."69 After practicing *tapas* for one thousand years "he cleansed himself" or purified himself ($\sqrt{p\bar{u}}$) of that evil.70 Being purified of evil is directly correlated with attaining the heavenly world. The next passage promises that one who practices *tapas* "shall share in the world of heaven,"71 as did Prajapati.72

Satapatha Brahmana 8, 4, 2, 2 and other passages suggest that the gods themselves were at first mortal and therefore subject to the evil of death. *Taittiriya Brahmana 3*, 12, 3, 1 states: "The gods gained their divine rank through *tapas."*73"Filled with *tapas"* they entered a "sacrificial session"74 and thus drove out evil (*papman*)and were born again.75 The gods are thus a model for man: "And in like manner" will the sacrificer now, entering a sacrificial session filled with *tapas*, "drive out evil and be born again."76 *Satapatha Brahmana* 4, 6, 9, 12-13 in this context again correlates the overcoming of evil with attaining heaven and then observes: "Even as a snake frees itself from its skin, so do they [i.e., the sacrificers] free themselves from all evil."

The evil or *papman* to which we have made reference in the previous passages refers not to a specific act, a particular transgression, or a crime. As indicated, it refers to one's given, mortal condition per se. It is perhaps appropriate then to raise the question of whether the word *tapas*, as it has been used here and in a preceding section, may be translated as "penance." Eggeling, Keith, Griffith, Hume and others have very frequently translated the word in this way when it appears in a ritual context. This is, however, misleading. The word *penance*, as dictionary definitions make clear, is appropriately used if one refers to an act of mortification consequent upon and

calculated to in some way *atone* for a specific evil act, a particular transgression, or a crime. In the ritual context of the Brahmanas, however, emphasis is placed upon overcoming man's given condition per se. *Satapatha Brahmana* 8, 3, 1, 12 states that man, "being born in this world, is really intended to be born in the heavenly world." *Tapas*, then, as asceticism, enables one to rise from a given condition to a clearly positive, specifically a divine condition.

There is then a distinction between *tapas* as asceticism employed as a means of ritual purification for purposes of overcoming the human condition per se and *tapas* as penance which atones for specific transgressions. The *Avantaradiksa*, or intermediary consecration, described in the Brahmanas, provides an excellent illustration of how *tapas* functions in these two distinct ways. After the *Diksa*, yet before the Soma Sacrifice, discord arose between the gods. "They desired an *atonement* for having spoken evil *[papman]* to one another. " 77 Here a specific act is characterized as *papman* and atonement is necessary. The text continues:

> By means of fire they enveloped (the body) with a skin. Now, fire being *tapas*, and the *Diksa* being *tapas*, they thereby underwent an intermediate consecration; and because they underwent that intermediate consecration, therefore this intermediate consecration (is performed [by man]). . . . And [therefore] so does he [i.e., the sacrificer] thereby *make atonement* for what heretofore he has done injurious to the vow [of asceticism, i.e.,

tapas].78

Having atoned through *tapas* for a violation of his ascetic vow, he then reaffirms his commitment to that vow and redoubles his ascetic behavior (*tapas*).79 *Tapas* as a means of penance atones for the neglect of *tapas* as a ritual asceticism. These two functions of *tapas*, although interrelated here, are nonetheless structurally distinct.

We present, further, the following suggestion: It is largely because *tapas* had been regarded as a primary means of ritual purification that it progressively becomes the essential means of atoning for specific transgressions or acts of evil. This shift in emphasis can be clearly seen by comparing the Brahmanas with the later legal literature. There is a great emphasis in this later literature upon cataloging specific crimes or moral transgressions, upon noting the impurity resulting from such transgressions, upon cataloging appropriate penances which enable one to atone for such specific "sins" (i.e., *papman, papa, enas*), and upon the resultant purification that such penances provide. *Manu* states in this regard that "a man who omits a prescribed act, or performs a blamable act. . . must perform an [expiatory] penance [*prayascitta*]."80The text counsels also that "penances must always be per-

formed for the sake of purification [*vi-*√*śudh*]." 81 *Manu* 11, 103 makes it clear that penances atone for and remove the guilt or evil (*enas*)incurred by committing specific transgressions.

Relatedly, *tapas,* no doubt because of its long ritual association with purification, becomes the primary means of atoning for such evil acts and removing impurity. *Tapas* becomes the primary means of penance [i.e., *prayascitta*]to such an extent that the two become virtually synonymous. *Manu* 11, 102, which virtually equates *tapas* and penance, tells us that *tapas* removes or destroys the guilt or evil incurred as a consequence of immoral acts.82 *Manu* also informs us that man effaces or destroys his "sins" by *tapas* (4, 107), and that the individual soul (*bhutatman*)is cleansed or purified [√*śudh*]by *tapas* (5, 109). *Manu* 11, 240 states: "Both those who have committed mortal sins (*mahapataka*)and all other offences are freed from their guilt or evil [*enas*]by means of well-performed *tapas." Gautama Dharma Sutra* 23, 27 reads: "For abuse, speaking an untruth, and doing injury, (one shall practice) *tapas* for . . . a period of three (days and) nights." Such illustrations from the legal literature could easily be multiplied.

Once again, *tapas* as purifying penance remains transparent to perhaps its "earliest" meaning, the fire's destructive heat. *Manu* 11, 242 states: "Whatever 'sin' *[enas]* men commit by thoughts, words, or deeds, that they speedily *burn away* [destroy, consume, *nir-*√*dah*]by *tapas."* The use of fire imagery in the context of purifying penances is, in fact, striking. Consider the *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* (27, 1): "If a hundred improper acts, and even more, have been committed, . . . the *fire* of the Vedas destroys all (the guilt) of that man just as a (common) fire *consumes* fuel." This imagery is continued in the next passage: "As a fire that burns strongly consumes even green trees, even so the fire of the Veda destroys one's guilt caused by (evil) deeds." *Manu* 11, 247 states: "As a fire in one moment consumes ["burns up" or "destroys," *nir-*√*dah*] with its bright flame the fuel that has been placed on it, even so he who knows the Veda destroys all guilt [or evil, *papa*]by the fire of knowledge."83

We observed above that as part of his ritual purification the *diksita* sacrifices an oblation into the fire. The oblation, which is explicitly equated with the sacrificer himself, thus symbolizes the destruction of his given and impure condition. A similar symbolic act is described in the legal literature for purposes of destroying the guilt or evil incurred from specific transgressions. *Gautama Dharma Sutra* 24, 6, for example, requires that, as part of a penance for killing a Brahmin, the transgressor shall daily offer eight oblations into the fire. These oblations which are consumed symbolize respectively the hair, nails, skin, flesh, blood, sinews, bones, and marrow of the transgressor himself.

As in the Brahmanas, the destructive connotation of *tapas* is often combined with the other "early" connotation of *tapas,* namely pain. Once again, this pain, as in the Brahmanas, is a self-imposed, religiously necessary mortification. Consider, for example, the *Vasistha Dharma Satra* at 20, 47: "A sinner is liberated from guilt by *tormenting* his body, by *tapas* . . . ." *Tapas* is thus a self-imposed *pain* which *destroys* or consumes "sin," evil, guilt, and impurity. Significantly, however, such purification through *tapas* is no longer correlated with symbolically attaining a divine condition as it was in the

Brahmanas. It is rather correlated in the legal literature with attainingor better, regaininga purified human condition.

Specific Forms of Penance

According to the Brahmanas, the sacrificer was obligated to perform particular ascetic acts or observe particular ascetic restraints in order to generate *tapas,* thus overcoming his impure human condition. In the later legal literature many of these older practices remain crucial. Their purpose, though, is altered. They are now performed specifically as penance (*prayascitta*), as atonement for specific transgressions. Among the most significant of these atoning practices are fasting, *pranayama* (controlling or regulating one's breath), and *svadhyaya* (recitation of the Veda).

The *Satapatha Brahmana,* in a ritual context, noted that fasting is a form of *tapas,* 84 and the *diksita*, as part of the purifying consecration, was obliged to live for prolonged periods of time on "fast-milk" alone.85 Fasting, as stated, was also essential at the *Upasads* or "ascetic sieges" which the sacrificer was obligated to perform.86 Again he lived for twelve days on the "fast-milk" alone, a restraint equated with *tapas.*87 During the fast the sacrificer's human body was symbolically diminished or consumed in the heat of asceticism. The fasting symbolically destroys the hair, then the skin, then the blood, then the flesh, then the bones, then the marrow.88 The legal literature continues to equate fasting with *tapas,*89 and prescribes it frequently as a means of atoning for specific transgressions. The *Candrayana* or lunar penance, for example, requires that the transgressor increase his daily mouthfuls of food as the moon increases and diminish them as the moon decreases until at the new moon he fasts entirely.90 *Gautama Dharma Sutra* 27, 16 tells us that "he who has completed that [month-long penance] becomes free from sin and free from crime, and *destroys* all guilt." *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* in this context states: "A month during which he performs a *Candrayana*, the [sages] have called . . . 'a means of purification (*pavitra*).'* It is prescribed as an expiation of all (offences) for which no (special penance) has been mentioned."91 Fasts of various duration and intensity are meticulously prescribed as atonement for an almost endless number of specific transgressions. For

example, a man who has intentionally killed a dog must fast for three days as penance. 92 A penance for eating forbidden food consists of fasting until the entrails are empty.93

Many of the penances that entail fasting have proper names which clearly indicate their relation to *tapas*. For example, the *Taptakrcchra,* or "hot penance," consists of drinking hot milk, hot water, hot clarified butter, inhaling hot air, and fasting for prescribed periods.94 The heat or *tapas* of these items no doubt is regarded as a power that can destroy or consume impurity. The *Taittiriya Samhita,* for example, observes that hot milk is consumed for purity.95 Of particular interest are the *Samtapana*, the *Mahasamtapana,* and the *Atisamtapana* penances. Not only do they all entail fasts of varying intensity but the term *samtapana* clearly connotes "torment" or pain.96 The *Mahasamtapana* penance is thus the penance of "great torment"97 and the *Atisamtapana* the "extremely tormenting" penance.98 Transparency to the early meaning of $\sqrt{tap}$, namely pain, is evident. Through pain impurity is destroyed.

In addition to fasting, *pranayama* (holding, controling, or regulating one's breath) was also practiced by the *diksita* during the ritual in order to generate *tapas* or "magical heat" within the body.99 In the Brahmanas *pranayama* was regarded as a form of *tapas* which accompanies the ritual recitation of the Veda.100 The legal literature continues to equate *pranayama* with *tapas. Manu,* in fact, declares that *pranayama* is the best or highest form of *tapas.*101 *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* 25, 5 also tells us *that pranayama* is the highest form of *tapas* because through *pranayama* one generates *tapas* even to the ends of the hair and nails. In the legal literature *pranayama*, like fasting, functions primarily as a form of penance. *Manu* 6, 69, for example, states that *pranayama* must be performed "in order to expiate (the death) of those creatures which [one] unintentionally injures by day or night." He also observes that if one injures an animal, one regains purity by performing *pranayama* as a penance.102 *Visnu* tells us that *all evils* or transgressions may be effaced by the repeated practice of *pranayama* (55, 8), and *Baudhayana Dharma Sastra* states that precisely because *pranayama* is the highest form of *tapas* it serves as the best means of destroying evil or guilt (4, 1, 30).

It is noteworthy that fire imagery is continually associated with the breaths of man and *pranayama. Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 2, 18 equated the breaths of man with the sacrificial fire and relatedly *tapas. Atharva Veda* 5, 28, 1 had already stated that the breaths within man are "enveloped with *tapas." Jaiminiya Upanisad-Brahmana* 3, 32, 2-3 declared that breath is man's essence or innerself (*antaratman*), that this inner self is *tapas*, and that fire is the essence of *tapas:* "Therefore the breath of one who is heated [i.e.,

page_58

generates *tapas* through the practice of *tapas*]becomes hotter." 103 Such speculation lead eventually to the conclusion that regulation of breath or *pranayama* purifies through the power of an internal fire. *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* 25, 6, for example, states that through *pranayama* "air is generated and through air fire is produced . . . hence [one] is internally purified." The *Maitri Upanisad* tells us that not only the external fire but also man's internal fire is a pure (*suci*)and purifying (*pavamana*)purifier (*pavaka*).104 *Vajasaneyi Samhita* 17, 12 observed that Agni, as breath, dwells within man and purifies. The term *pavamana*, in fact, often applied to Agni, means not only "purifying" but also "the blowing one," equated with breath at *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 1, 6. Transparency to the destructive power of *tapas* is often evident. *Manu* 6, 71, for example, reads: "As the impurities of metallic ores, melted in the blast (of a furnace) are consumed, even so the taints of the organs are destroyed through the suppression of breath." It is the fire of *pranayama* that purifies.

The Brahmanas repeatedly associated *pranayama* with *svadhyaya*, or disciplined recitation of the Veda. The Veda was ritually recited while the breath was suppressed, held, or "sacrificed." *Svadhyava* was, in fact, itself regarded as a form of *tapas.*105 *Satapatha Brahmana 11,* 5, 7, 4, in this context, observes that during the practice of *svadhyaya* one is "burned (with [sacred] fire)106 up to the tips of the nails." The legal literature continues to regard *svadhyaya* as a form of *tapas. Apastamba Dharma Sutra 1,* 4, 12, 1, for example, notes that *svadhyaya* is *tapas,* and *Manu* 2, 166 states that *svadhyaya* is for a Brahmin the highest form of *tapas. Manu* 2, 167, in clear dependence on *Satapatha Brahmana 1 1,* 5, 7, 4, declares that when practicing *svadhyaya,* "man performs the highest *tapas,* up to the extremities of his nails."

Svadhyaya, like fasting and *pranayama*, is repeatedly prescribed as a penance. *Visnu* observes in this context that *svadhyaya* purifies and also that it frees one from guilt or evil.107 *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* 25, 12 states that if the guilt of all transgressions were to fall on one man, ten thousand recitations of the *Gayatri* (a particularly revered verse of the *Rg Veda)* would serve as a means of purification. *Baudhayana Dharma Sastra* 4, 1, 29-30 declares that *svadhyaya* is the highest form of *tapas* and thus "the best means of removing all sin." *Visnu 55*, 13 employs a familiar image in telling us that through recitation of the Veda "a twice-born man is purified even from a mortal sin [*mahapataka*], as a snake (is freed) from its withered skin." Predictably, fire imagery is also prevalent: "As a fire, fanned by wind, burns brighter, and (as its flame grows) through offerings, even so a [Brahmin] who is engaged in *svadhyaya* shines with a brilliant lustre."108 *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* 27, 7

page_59

observes that *svadhyaya* destroys guilt and *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* 27, 1 states that the fire of Vedic recitation destroys the guilt of a man just as a fire consumes fuel. 109

Clearly *tapas* in general, as well as the specific forms of *tapas* described, are perceived to have great power in removing or destroying impurity. The glorification of *tapas* in the legal literature is such, however, that it is granted not only the power to overcome impurity but also to prevent it. *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* 26, 19, for example, states: "No guilt taints a [Brahmin] who . . . practices *tapas* . . . though he may constantly commit sinful acts." *Tapas* is, in fact, perceived to be equivalent to *dharma* or moral action itself: "(The pursuit of sacred) knowledge is the *tapas* of a [Brahmin], protecting (the people) is the *tapas* of a Ksatriya, (the pursuit of) his daily business is the *tapas* of a Vaisya, and service the *tapas* of a Sudra."110 It is then not surprising that *Manu* (11, 245) explicitly declares the power of *tapas* to be "incomparable." Given the indispensable role of *tapas*, the path to purification and atonement must clearly be described as a *tapta-marga*.

page_60

Four
Tapas, Knowledge, and Spiritual Rebirth

A close correlation, in fact a causal relation, between *tapas* and knowledge is evident from the *Rg Veda* onward: *Tapas* yields cognitive illumination; the "heated effort" (√tap) of ascetic practice (√tap)yields divine revelation; devotional "fervor" (√tap) yields ecstatic insight; in the heat (√tap) of the ritual fire sacred visions emerge. *Tapas* empowers one to "see" or to "behold" (√dṛś)contents of a revelatory nature. The correlation between *tapas* and knowledge has been suggested by Oldenberg, Hauer, Keith, Deussen, Mookerji, and others in a series of rather general statements. Oldenberg, for example, notes that becoming heated through the practice of asceticism (e.g., fasting, breath-control) enables one to generate cognitive illumination (*Erleuchtung*). 1He states also that "through *tapas* man finds that which is hidden," and that "he who wishes to know the greatest of secrets practices *tapas*.2 Relatedly, Hauer observes that revelation is the result of *tapas*, as are new thoughts concerning the gods and the ritual.3 Mookerji has stated that both insight into the Veda and wisdom are the fruits of *tapas*.4

Although reaching its culmination in the principal Upanisads, the correlation of *tapas* and revelatory knowledge is evident from the *Rg Veda* to the Brahmanas and beyond. More importantly, the *tapas* of the human practitioner finds its paradigm in a mythological and celestial model. *Rg Veda* 10, 190, 1, for example, declares that both *rta* (Universal Order) and *satya* (Truth itself) were born of an incandescent or blazing *tapas*. Significantly, however, the poets and seers of the *Rg Veda* seek knowledge of *rta* and *satya* through *their own* practice of *tapas*.5 Relatedly, the Brahmanas continually inform us

that the entire corpus of revelation and sacred knowledge, namely the Veda, rests upon a foundation of *tapas*. This is true "in the beginning" and paradigmatically, for it is *tapas* that brings the Veda into being and serves as its cosmic foundation. It is, however, also true "now" and here below: The ascetic, the Vedic student, and the sacrificer all stand upon their own foundation of *tapas* in their search for revelation, insight, and wisdom. *Manu* sums up the Vedic position with precision:

> The lord, Prajapati, *created* the sacred law [of the Veda] by his *tapas* alone; the sages likewise *obtained (revelation of)* the Vedas through *their tapas*. 6

Understanding the correlation between *tapas* and knowledge begins, then, at the mythological, cosmogonic, and paradigmatic level.

"In the Beginning" and "On High"

As is so often the case, Prajapati provides a celestial model for earthly activity.7 Prajapati, as *Taittiriya Samhita* 3, 1, 1, 1 observes, must engage in *tapas* in order to "see" or "behold" (√dṛś) or have revealed to him specific aspects of the sacrifice. He, for example, "saw" the speech of the *diksita* only after engaging in *tapas*. Having seen the speech of the *diksita* through *tapas*, Prajapati is capable of being reborn, of regenerating himself. So also must the gods practice *tapas* in order to "behold" the sacred mechanisms of the ritual. It is this knowledge of the sacrifice which ultimately insures their superiority over the Asuras (i.e., demons). Consider, for example, *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 2, 8-9: "Now the gods and the Asuras, both of them were offspring of Prajapati; [they] were contending with each other." Then the gods, "hoping that they might be able to overcome their enemies," engaged in asceticism. As a consequence, they beheld the immortal *Agnyadheya*, or sacrificial fire. Having seen this immortal element by means of asceticism, they placed it within themselves and hence became immortal. This sequence of events is of great significance. It demonstrates not only the causal relation between asceticism and revelatory knowledge but also between that revelatory knowledge and the resultant "immortality." This celestial scenario and the preceding one involving Prajapati thus constitute paradigmatic models for man's spiritual rebirth through the sacrifice. Relatedly, the gods see *(*√dṛś)the rites of the New and Full Moon Sacrifice while exerting themselves ascetically. Through this revealed sacrifice the gods then ascend to heaven as will the sacrificer, symbolically, during his spiritual rebirth.

The cosmogonic account that beings the *Gopatha Brahmana* is interest-

ing in this context. 8 Here Brahma(n), perceived as Primal Being, exerts himself through "heated effort" in order to "see" and to know. The *tapas* of Brahman manifests itself as sweat (*sveda*).9 The *bandhu-seeking* etymology of the Brahmanas, however, homologizes *sveda,* or sweat, with *su-veda,* or excellent knowledge. The heated effort of *tapas* yields sweat that *is* knowledge.

At the paradigmatic level it is most evidently the *rsis* who illustrate the essential relation between *tapas* and the ability to see and therefore to know. The mythical *rsis,* or seers, usually come into being after the gods but before man, although they are sometimes placed at the very beginning of primordial time. Whatever their place in the cosmogonic hierarchy, however, the *rsis* are invariably associated with *tapas. Rg Veda* 10, 154, 5 observes that the rsis "were born of *tapas"* (*tapojan*). They are further described as *"tapas-pos*sessing" (*tapasvato*).10We read often that they "rested in *tapas"*11or, to take Mookerji's translation, they were "absorbed in *tapas"* (*tapase ye niseduh*).12 *Atharva Veda* 8, 10, 25 relates that the seven *rsis* "live on *tapas"* (*tapas ca saptarsayas upa jivanti* . .), and verse 11, 1, 1, 6 states that they are "very hot" (*tapisthas*).

Satapatha Brahmana 6, 1, 1, 1 reads:

> Verily, in the beginning there was here the non-existent. As to this they say, "What was that non-existent?" The Rsis, assuredly,it is they that were the non-existent. . . Inasmuch as before (the existence of) this universe, they desiring it, wore themselves out (√ṛṣ) with toil [√śram]and *tapas,* therefore (they are called) Rsis.

In this passage, the mystical and *bandhu-seeking* etymology of the Brahmanas derives the term *rsi* from √ṛṣ) (to wear oneself out). As is clear, the *rsis* wear themselves out through *tapas.* Given this "mystical" albeit pseudo etymology, it is precisely because of their "heated effort" that they are *rsis.* But the term *rsi* is also (and more correctly) an etymological derivative of √dṛś), meaning "to see." That is, of course, precisely what the *rsis* do: they "behold." The *rsis* see and know by means of "heated effort" (√tap).

Through *tapas* the rsis discover that which is concealed. At *Atharva Veda* 4, 35, 2 we learn that the rice-mess offering was discovered through the *tapas* of the *rsis.* This offering, in turn heated by *tapas,* brought immortality into being. As each refrain of this hymn makes clear, it is by this offering that one overcomes death (i.e., attains spiritual rebirth). At *Taittiriya Samhita* 3, 3, 5, 2:

> Prajapati saw the Viraj [i.e., personified cosmic preeminence]; by it he created the past and the future; he concealed it from the Rsis; by *tapas,* [the *rsi*]Jamadagni beheld it. . . 13

The gods, as often observed in the Brahmanas, attained immortality through the ritual sacrifice. But the gods are often jealous in this regard. They "conceal" the rites from the *rsis* and from man, thereby denying man spiritual rebirth. It is, however, the *rsis* who, through *tapas,* behold and discover these hidden rites, thus permitting man's spiritual rebirth and ascent to immortality.

The *rsis* are visionaries; they frequently see that which does not yet exist. Their *tapas* is therefore not only a heated effort but also a "meditativebrooding," a cognitive incubation. And from that cognitive, meditative incubation emerges the reality itself, hatching, as it were, from the egg of thought. The *rsis* see or meditate upon components of creation not yet in existence and by doing so they actually bring those components into being. Within the *tapas* of the rsis is thus reflected ascetic effort, cognitive brooding, and hatching heat.14 This cognitive-brooding, early on expressed in the activity of the *rsis,* will become increasingly significant in Vedic thought.

At the paradigmatic level, then, *tapas* facilitates a seeing, a knowing, a revealing. Further, it is very often the sacrifice itself or components of the sacrifice that are revealed and, relatedly, brought into being. But the sacrifice, as stated, is the primary vehicle of spiritual rebirth both mythologically and ritually. Through sacrifice at the paradigmatic level, as just illustrated, the gods overcame death, attained immortality, and ascended to heaven. It is therefore "seeing-through-tapas" and "knowing-through-tapas" that make spiritual rebirth a possibility not only "in the beginning" and "on high" but also now and here below.

Now and Here Below

Moving from the celestial to the earthly arena, we find the correlation of *tapas* and knowledge well illustrated in the activities of the poet-priest, the ascetic, the Vedic student *(brahmacarin),* and the sacrificer. Asceticism enables one to transcend the human condition, obtain revelation, discover secret wisdom, contact divine powers, and comprehend the Veda itself. We indicated above that the *rsi* Jamadagni beheld the Viraj (i.e., cosmic preeminence) by means of *tapas.*15 *Atharva Veda* 8, 9, 3 observes, however, that *the priest may also* know the Viraj by means of *tapas.* Just as the rsis "before" him, so too the earthly seer, the poet-priest of *Rg Veda* 8, 59, 6 has a vision. He beholds the original, the primordial sacrifice itself and states: "This I saw through *tapas" (tapasabhy apasyam).*

Rg Veda 10, 136 describes a mystical brotherhood of ecstatics: the *kesins.* These enigmatic visionaries clearly embody a union of asceticism and knowledge. The hymn, however, although often interpreted, remains obscure. It is therefore difficult to understand the precise relation between asceticism and knowledge which these elusive fellows embody. As most scholars have observed, however, they are ascetics. The term *kesin* itself, meaning "longhaired" (v. 1), suggests as much. The hymn refers to them also as *munis* (v. 2), practitioners of silence. They are also said to hold or carry fire (v. 1) (perhaps within themselves). They wear soiled robes or nothing at all (v. 2). 16 Although clearly ascetics, it would, I believe, be ill-founded to see them as proto-yogis, as numerous scholars have done. It is, however, completely justifiable to see them as ecstatics: they have visions; they have clairvoyant ability; they know the thoughts of others (v. 6). In their ecstatic vision they see from on high, as if flying through the air (v. 4). They do, quite literally, stand outside themselves, as the term ecstatic suggests. Following the wind, they go where the gods have gone, or perhaps the gods enter into them as part of their ecstatic vision (v. 2). There is obscurity here, but there is also an undeniable correlation between asceticism and "seeing" in the figure of these long-haired "enthusiasts." It is, I believe, instructive to consider in this context the much later but also much clearer statement of *Manu* at 10, 237:

> The Sages [i.e., ascetics] who control themselves [i.e., practice *brahmacarya*]and subsist on fruit, roots, and air *survey the three worlds . .through their tapas alone.*17

Here "ecstatic" vision or mystical revelation is clearly the consequence of *tapas.* Relatedly, one of the Dharma Sutras18 states that the ascetic practitioner of *brahmacarya* attains "second-sight" or clairvoyant ability. At *Gopatha Brahmana* 1,1, 16, the practice of *brahmacarya* in a place of solitude provides the ascetic a mystic vision of the syllable *Om,* which in turn yields various desiderata.

Agni, the personified and ritual fire, helps generate wisdom, vision, and knowledge for those who toil devotedly in his presence. As noted so often, *tapas* is inherent in Agni's very nature. He both possesses and radiates *tapas;* he is clearly a *tapasvin.* But Agni is also a seer,19 a visionary. He is called Jatavedas ("knower of beings") and Visvavedas ("he who knows the universe").20 That Agni grants knowledge and revelation is clear; how he does this, however, is obscure. The texts often suggest that heat ($\sqrt{tap}$)is generated within the devotee, be he priest, sacrificer, or Vedic student. *Atharva Veda* 7, 61, 1 is addressed to the sacred fire:

yad agne tapasa tapa upatapyamahe tapah
priyah srutasya bhuyasmayusmantah sumedhasah

> When, Agni, (we create) *tapas* by means of *tapas,* (and when) we heat up *tapas* in ourselves, may we be in accord with the revealed (word), . . and possessed of clear insight. 21

Hauer's suggestion22 that the devotee began to hallucinate because of the great heat must be accepted with some caution. The texts certainly lend no confirmation to this view. The texts, however, certainly suggest that the *head* of the devotee becomes heated. *Rg Veda* 4, 2, 6 describes the sacrificial priest in his devotion to Agni as "he who carries fuel for you, sweating, or who heats [$\sqrt{tap}$] his head because of (devotion to) you. . . "23 The devotee is often described as "head-heated" (*tapurmurdhan*), and this head-heat has evident implications for vision, wisdom, and knowledge. The most evident consequence is that this head-heat turns "the ordinary ritual priest into a *rsi,"* as Blair has observed.24 Not only is Agni a seer; he turns his devotee into one as well. At *Rg Veda* 1, 131, 16, for example, Agni is explicitly termed the

rsikrt, the rsi-maker." Agni kindles an internal glow in the devotee (*Rg Veda* 6, 9, 6). Not only the devotee, but also the vision that he beholds is described as "glowing" (*Rg Veda* 6, 8, 6). Agni, in fact, dwells *within* the devotee himself. This "interior-Agni" is a significant force in Vedic thought. In this context, Gonda speaks of "kindling the inner fire of illumination" and, thereby, attaining revelation and "secret wisdom."25

The pursuit of knowledge (*vidya*)by the Vedic student (*brahmacarin*)relies heavily upon Agni, both as an external and as an internal fire. The *brahmacarin* labors devotedly in close proximity to the fire. He "enkindles" and fuels the fire regularly;26 he is seated beside it27 during periods of instruction and study. He is, in fact, so close to the fire that he often touches it.28 At the student's *Upanayana* (initiation) and at his *Medhajanana* (rite to generate wisdom or intelligence), the *Kausika Sutra* prescribes that *Atharva Veda 7*, 61, 1 be recited before the sacred fire:

> When, Agni (we create) *tapas* by means of *tapas*, (and when) we heat up *tapas* in ourselves, may we be in accord with the revealed (word) . . . and possessed of clear insight.29

Throughout the student life-stage *(brahmacarya asrama)* the *brahmacarin* repeatedly approaches the fire. As he does so he also recites a verse prescribed at *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 10, 6:

> May Agni [grant] to me faith and insight, not-forgetting (what I have learned) and memory.

At the student's initiation the teacher declares: "Agni is thy teacher." 30 Therewith he places the student in Agni's care just as Agni is placed in the student's care.

Chandogya Upanisad 4, 10 tells of the *brahmacarin* Upakosala. This devoted student, seeking wisdom, tended the fires of his teacher for the prescribed period of twelve years (v. 1). After that time the teacher's wife said to her husband:

> The *brahmacarin* has performed his *tapas*. He has tended the fires well. Let not the fires anticipate you in teaching him. Teach him yourself (v. 2).31

But the teacher went off on a journey without instructing the *brahmacarin*. The *brahmacarin* then fasted. The fires said to each other:

> The *brahmacarin* has performed his *tapas*. He has tended us well. Come! Let us teach him (v. 4).32

With that the fires reveal to the student the nature of Brahman, or being-itself. What is again evident here is the reciprocity between the *brahmacarin* and Agni(s). This reciprocity is most evident in a mutual "enkindling." At the *Upanayana*, the *brahmacarin* addresses himself to the fire:

> As thou art inflamed, Agni, through that piece of wood, thus inflame me through wisdom, insight . . . and holy lustre.33

The description of the *Upanayana* given by the *Satapatha Brahmana* establishes an explicit homology between "placing fuel upon the fire" and "enkindling the mind."34

The *brahmacarin* is a pivotal figure in the development of Vedic asceticism. Relatedly, the correlation between *tapas* and knowledge in his "career" *(asrama)* extends well beyond his association with Agni. Gonda has observed that the entire learning endeavor of the *brahmacarin* rested upon a foundation of *tapas*.35 This generalization is certainly correct. One of the items that the *brahmacarin* receives at the *Upanayana* is a power-laden girdle (*mekhala*). The *Kausika Sutra*, in describing the tying of the girdle, specifically prescribes the use of *Atharva Veda* 6, 133 for this occasion. Herein the

girdle is described as "born of *tapas"* (*tapaso 'dhi jata*). 36 The *mekhala* is further asked to grant thought, wisdom, and *tapas* to the *brahmacarin*. The conjunction of *tapas*, thought, and wisdom (i.e., *medha*)here is significant. The girdle, born of *tapas*, imparts *tapas* and, therewith, wisdom. The hymn, however, also states that just as the *brahmacarin* binds

himself now with the girdle, so did the rsis of old bind themselves with it.37 In this context it is interesting to note that the *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* describes the *brahmacarin* at the *Upanayana* as a "descendant of the rsis."38 Like the *rsis*, the *brahmacarin* is a "seer-through-tapas." Relatedly, the *Upakarman*, the "sacrament" (*samskara*)by which the annual course of study is begun, was discovered (i.e., seen) by the rsis through the power of their *tapas*.39

Despite the association of the *brahmacarin* with the *rsis* here, it would, I believe, be ill-founded to regard the *brahmacarin* as a visionary or seer of an ecstatic type. Hauer's suggestion that the *brahmacarin* was indeed an ecstatic proves indefensible if one considers Vedic references other than *Atharva Veda* 11, 5. The *brahmacdrin* is clearly different from the *kesins* of *Rg Veda* 10, 136. The *brahmacarin's* knowledge is far more the product of steadfast effort than it is of ecstatic or clairvoyant insight. It is, however, most certainly the product of *tapas*. This is evidenced by the ascetic vows, or *vratas*, that the Vedic student upholds. The learning endeavor is directly linked to such austere practices as fasting, control of breath (*pranayama*), prolonged silence, begging, isolation in the forest, remaining awake at night, sleeping on the ground, standing for prolonged periods, andmost importantlychastity (*brahmacarya*). In fact, the term *brahmacarya* is sometimes used interchangeably with the term *vrata*.40 The *Atharva Veda* notes that *vrata* is maintained by *tapas*,41 and *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* states that the *brahmacarin* "should be addicted to *tapas"* during a *vrata*.42 Specific *vratas* are observed, austerities are practiced, for varying periods of time up to one year and more43 before each new portion of the Veda is taught to the student. The ascetic *vrata* is an essential precondition for revelatory knowledge and wisdom. Relatedly, the *Medhajanana* (the rite to generate wisdom) is performed only after a *vrata* lasting up to one year.44 *Tapas* should be seen here as an ascetic prerequisite for knowledge45 or as a corequisite, but not as a precondition for "ecstasy." *Manu* clearly indicates the inseparability of *tapas* and learning in the life of the student:

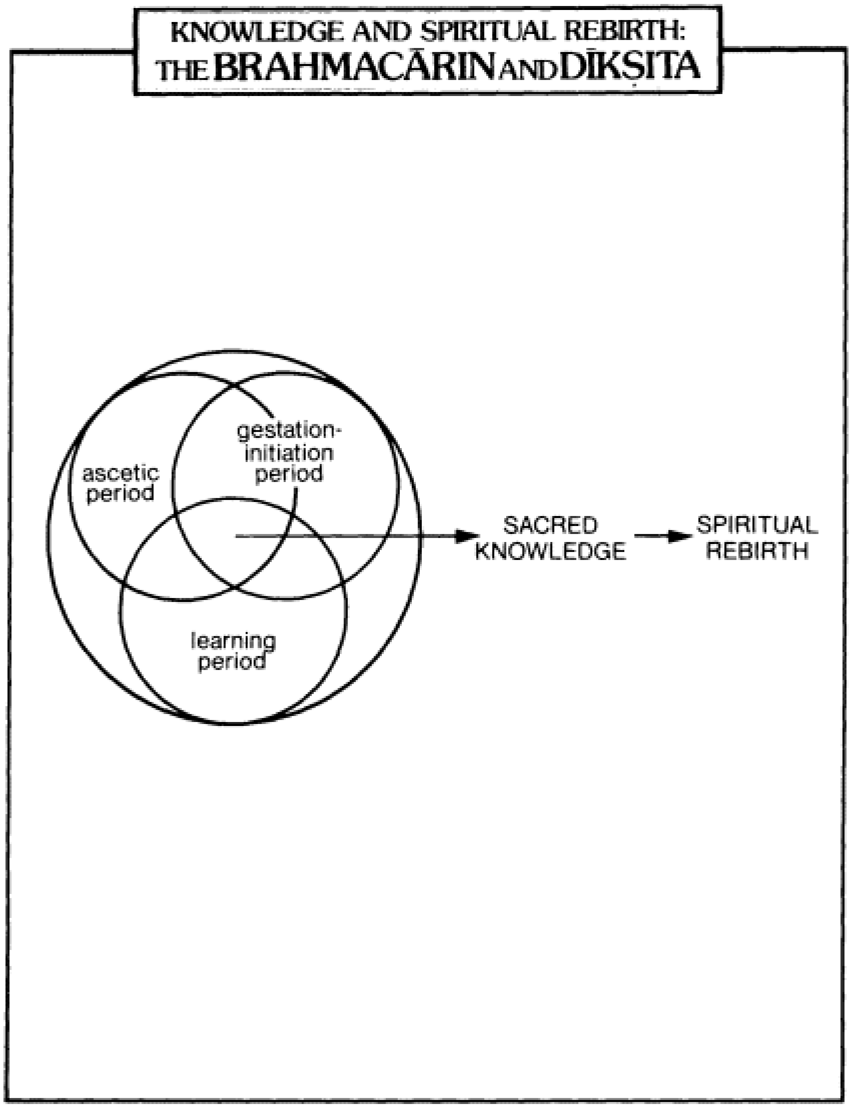
> A twice-born man . . . should *gradually and cumulatively* perform the various austerities [*tapas*]prescribed for (those who) study the Veda. An Aryan must study the whole Veda . . . , performing *at the same time* various kinds of austerities [*tapas*]and vows [*vratas*]prescribed by the rules (of the Veda).46

Mythological scenarios cited above demonstrate clearly the inseparability of *tapas*, knowledge, and spiritual rebirth at the paradigmatic level. The knowledge that issues from *tapas* yields spiritual rebirth. This is again evident in the career of the *brahmacarin*. Rebirth symbolism, as indicated, is conspicuous. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 5, 4, 16 notes that the student becomes an embryo. Quite significantly, although the length of an ascetic *vrata* may vary, its duration is invariably a homologue or symbolic equivalent of the gestation period (e.g., nine months, twelve months, nine days, twelve days, three days, etc.). 47 The *brahmacarin* is quite strikingly an embryo in the womb of knowledge (*vidya*). And it is the Veda, which he approaches through *tapas*, that now gives him birth. The *brahmacarin* "broods" upon the Veda with a cognitive hatching-heat and is himself reborn. He is appropriately termed a *dvi-ja*, as is the chick hatched from its egg; he is "twice-born." *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 1, 1, 1, 15-17 indicates quite clearly that the teacher causes the pupil to be born a second time by imparting to him the sacred knowledge (*vidya*). The second birth is the better one, the text continues, for the father and mother produce only the body.

Tapas, knowledge, and spiritual rebirth are also tightly interwoven in the ritual fabric. Without proper knowledge the sacrifical procedure would be fruitless, even dangerous. The *diksita-yajamana*, like the *brahmacarin*, is spiritually reborn through *vidya* or *medha* (i.e., knowledge, wisdom). He too is an embryo in the Veda-womb. Already at *Atharva Veda* 19, 40, 3, *diksa*, *tapas*, and *medha* are inseparably bound, and through them, as the next verse48 makes clear, heaven is attained. *Manava Grhya Sutra*49 uses the term *diksa* to indicate a ceremonial initiation into Vedic study as well as into the sacrificial scenario.

In discussing the *Pravargya* above,50 we made particular reference to the ascetic *vrata* which precedes the sacrifice per se. The consecration that precedes the sacrifice (*Avantaradiksa*)lasts one year, a homologue of the gestation period. The numerous and specific tapas-generating observances of the *diksita* at the *Pravargya* need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that during this period he becomes a *tapasvin*.51 He is, however, during this period most certainly also a "student of sacred knowledge." His teacher during this year states to him: "Thou art a *brahmacarin."*52Indeed, the *Pravargya* itself is described by *Manu* as an a*ranyaka;* it is, as van Buitenen states, a "mystery rite,"53 during which revelatory knowledge is received. In fact, according to certain texts, the ritual should only be performed for one who seeks *brahmavarcas*, or "splendor of learning."54 The *Manava Grhya Sutra*,55 in fact, prescribes the *Pravargya* for one who desires to understand the "secret doctrine" (i.e., *rahasyam; upanisad*).56 The *Pravargya's* concern

with spiritual rebirth is accentuated by its intent of generating a second-self for the participant. 57 What strikes us then at the *Pravargya* and at other sacrifices as well58 is the simultaneity of three periods: an ascetic period, a learning period, and a gestation or initiatory period. These three periods are coterminous and identical, and taken together, they "generate" the reborn *diksita*. Through the *tapta-marga*, or heated passage, one is reborn!



Five
A Vedic Watershed: Karma/Jñana

Ritual action and sacred knowledge were double foci of the early Veda. Around these two revolved an integrated cosmos

of thought and behavior. Although it is commonplace to suggest that Vedic religion found its center in ritual, the great importance of knowledge must be recognized even in the earliest Veda. 1 As demonstrated, a "seeing-through-tapas" or a "knowing through-*tapas"* generated various forms of spiritual rebirth: overcoming death, ascent to heaven, creation of a second-self, and so forth. In this regard, it is clear how ritual action and sacred knowledge worked in tandem as Vedic focal points. Without the appropriate knowledge, ritual action is not only ineffective but even dangerous. Sacred knowledge, however, became progressively more important in Vedic thought. There is, in fact, one very evident trend in which knowledge progressively eclipses ritual action as a Vedic focus.

This trend becomes conspicuous in the Brahmanas with their increasing emphasis upon an esoteric or secret knowledge which must accompany the ritual. It is not so much the manual performance of the sacrifice that accounts for its effectiveness, but rather this secret knowledge of the hidden "connections" (i.e., *bandhu, nidana*)which the ritual embodies and actualizes. To know these hidden "identities" and, relatedly, the ultimate ground that undergirds the ritual is to know "all." The increasing prestige of knowledge eventuates in an imperialism which declares mystical or esoteric knowledge alone to be religiously efficacious. This trend, culminating in the early Upanisads, is well-illustrated by the terms *evam vidvan* ("knowing thus") and *ya evam veda* ("one who knows thus") found already in the *Atharva Veda* and continually repeated in the Brahmanas. These terms invariably follow

explanations regarding the esoteric significance of ritual action and accentuate the perspective that such knowledge, even such knowledge alone, brings about a multitude of desired results. Mystical knowledge regarding the ritual assumes increasing precedence over ritual action or external performance. Knowledge becomes differentiated from action and is increasingly perceived, in this particular tradition, to be clearly superior.

The growing significance of the *brahman* priest and his ritual function as sacral supervisor relatedly illustrate the growing prestige of knowledge. Sitting to the south of the sacrificial fires, where demonic forces gathered, the *brahman* performed no manual activity. He rather followed the course of the sacrifice mentally in order to protect it from harm or error. Should an error in manual detail occur, the correction was made immediately by the *brahman.* But it was made through his mental powers alone, not through any rectifying action, or *karma.* Simply stated: Where *karma*, or action, failed, *jñana, vidya,* or knowledge prevailed. The *Taittiriya Samhita* states clearly: "What [at the sacrifice] is imperfect, [that] is made perfect by mind" (2, 5, 11, 4).

In the early Veda, when power or *brahman* was perceived to reside within the sound of the articulated hymn, it was the *hotr,* the reciting priest, who was custodian of that power. As the ritual became progressively more elaborate and *brahman* came to be seen as the underlying power and foundation of sacrificial activity, it was the *adhvaryuperformer* of ritual actionwho became custodian of the *brahman-power.* With the ascendance of the *brahman-priest* over the *adhvaryu* we see, too, a further and related amplification in the concept of *brahman*.. Not merely the underlying power of sacrificial performance, *brahman* comes to be seen as the power underlying reality itself, from which the sacrifice emanates and to which it gives concrete expression. To know *brahman,* as did the *brahman-priest,* is hence to know all. And such knowledge took increasing precedence over any ritual action.

Knowledge, once a focus in tandem with ritual action, becomes the primary focus of an entire Vedic tradition. It is important to realize, however, that action, too, becomes the center of its own tradition or trend. The two diverge, therefore, each becoming a focus around which two differing, though interrelated, constellations of thought and behavior revolve. It is in this regard that we speak of a Vedic watershed. Two trends begin to diverge in Vedic thought, one centered in *jñana,* the other in *karma.* It is this very distinction that prompted Hindu thinkers to differentiate explicitly the *jñana-kanda* (i.e., texts having to do with soteriological knowledge) from the *karma-kanda* (i.e., texts having to do with action). This distinction will eventually culminate in the *jñana-marga* and the *karma-marga* respectively, two different, though interrelated "paths" to salvation.

Although the contrast between *jñana-kanda* and *karma-kanda* is explicit, relegating specific passages to one category or the other was not and is not always easy. To therefore oversimplify: Texts or passages dealing with action and proper

behavior, including the external performance of ritual, are in *the tradition and spirit* of the *karma-kanda.* These include the Brahmanas, the Srauta Sutras, the Grhya Sutras, the Dharma Sutras, and the Dharma Sastras. It is almost exclusively with this tradition that we have dealt thus far. By contrast, the early Upanisads, with their emphasis upon a saving knowledge, are clearly classified as *jñana-kanda.* Just as it would be false to suggest that a later *jñana-marga* replaced an earlier *karma-marga,* so would it be false to suggest that the *jñana-kanda* eclipsed the *karma-kanda* in importance or that *jñana* totally eclipsed *karma* in the Vedic world. Each becomes, as suggested, the center or focus of its own tradition, and they begin to diverge. But they will also converge, each affecting the other. 2 As a consequence, the orthodoxy of the *karma-kanda* is influenced by the innovations of the *jñana-kanda,* thereby contributing to a new synthesis in which the great prestige of liberating knowledge is recognized, but often with impatience and a certain ambivalence.

We illustrated above the growing importance of knowledge at the ritual. The triumph of knowledge in the *jñana-kanda* cannot, however, be comprehended from the perspective of the sacrificial ritual and its promised rewards. It must rather be seen from the perspective of that new worldview and that new soteriology which came to clear light in the early Upanisads. This too is part of the Vedic watershed.

Although the Upanisads do not present a systematic or even a single "philosophy," certain dominant ideas or leading themes emerge in the early texts. These dominant ideas, when systematically arranged, suggest a worldview quite different from that expressed in the earlier Veda. We have repeatedly noted the desired Vedic goal of spiritual rebirth to immortality and how that goal was guaranteed through the ritual mechanism and its attendant *tapas.* Being reborn spiritually and having lived his span of earthly years, the *yajamana* looked forward to an assured and unending immortality beyond. *Taittiriya Brahmana* 3, 10, 11, 2, however, warns that, with time, the effects of ritual *karma* will be consumed and immortality will actually *end.* Although "immortal," one will "die again" in the beyond, despite all appropriate attention to sacrificial procedure. This prospect of "re-death" (*punarmrtyu*)began to threaten the grandeous claims of ritual endeavor.

In time, the fear of re-death gave rise to an even greater fear: recurrent death and rebirth in earthly form. The doctrine of transmigration emerged. One

no longer foresaw an endless and uninterrupted immortality, but rather an endless circle of death, rebirth, finitude, sorrow, and suffering (i.e., *samsara*). 3 Not only did ritual action become suspect, but so too did all worldly aim and end. Lifetime after lifetime, the wheel rolled on. The term *karma* now received a second and more personal meaning: it referred not only to ritual action but to *every* action, to every "doing," to every deed. Each act brought forth a consequence; each deed bore fruit. As *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 3, 2, 13 observes, "one becomes good by good action, bad by bad action." *Karma* came to be seen as an endless chain of cause and effect, binding one to an endless round of death and rebirth.

With the pessimism of *samsara,* however, came also the optimism of *moksa:* liberation from finitude, from change, from death and rebirth. Immortality (i.e., "not-dying-anymore-ness"; *amrtatvam),* still the Vedic goal, referred no longer to an endless particularity or individuality in heaven or elsewhere but rather to deliverance or release from all such limitations of name and form. *Moksa,* however, was not attainable through ritual action. The karmic chain could not be severed by sacrificial performance. Ritual action (i.e., *karma*)could not deliver one from the fruits of action (i.e., *karma*). To end *karma,* to deprive it of its causal power, and, relatedly, to end the suffering of transmigration, one had first to discover the driving force beneath the karmic chain. That underlying force had to be rooted out. The *jñana-kanda* identified that force as the interrelated power of desire and ignorance.

Desires, perpetually generated by the individual, "sought" fulfillment. But as old desires were satisfied, new desires arose, propelling the chain of *karma* ever forward. With the death of the body or outward form, unfulfilled desires pressed on toward satisfaction. As a consequence, a new form, a new "persona"4 came into being. Death was followed by rebirth. As long as desire remained, *karma* persisted and, therewith, the endless round of *samsara.* To end transmigration, then, it was necessary to end desire. Desire, however, was rooted in ignorance, and rested upon a false perception of reality. Only a fundamental change in perception could therefore end desire. *Avidya* and *kama* were inseparable. Although Yajñavalkya in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* and Uddalaka in the *Chandogya Upanisad* differ somewhat regarding the relative culpability of ignorance and desire, an inter-relatedness is seen by both thinkers. The ignorant individual

perceives separation where there is none. He sees plurality and distinction and, therefore, sees himself as something separate. It is, however, precisely the perception of separation which makes desire possible. As long, therefore, as the perception of plurality and separation remained, so too would desire. It is at this juncture that Uddalaka in the *Chandogya* expresses a fundamental message of the

Upanisads. There is ultimately no distinction, no separation, no plurality. Ignorance alone is responsible for such a perception. When the veil of ignorance is lifted, the "many" are perceived as the "One." Where the individual saw distinction he now sees identity; where he saw plurality he now sees unity. This identity and unity became articulated in the doctrine of Atman/Brahman. 5

Once regarded as the power inherent in the sacrificial mantras, *brahman* came to be seen as the power underlying the entire sacrifice and, finally, as the power underlying reality itself. Already at *Atharva Veda 4, 1, brahman* is described as the "womb" from which emerge both the existent and the nonexistent. Without the unchanging Brahman, the world of flux perceived by the senses would have no being. Because Brahman is the essence of all, a knowledge of Brahman would be a knowledge of all. This goal the Upanisads declare to be attainable for the simple reason that Brahman is identical with the essence of man. Brahman is one with the Atman or inner Self, as Uddalaka repeatedly tells his son in the famous phrase *tat tvam asi* ("thou art that"). Knowing Atman or the innermost Self therefore makes possible a knowledge of Brahman.

Such knowledge, and such knowledge alone, brings with it the end of all desire. For when it is realized experientially that there is no essential separation, then desire becomes meaningless and ceases to be. Knowing that he is separated from nothing, the Brahman-knower desires nothing. When the ignorance that perceived separation is overcome by a knowledge that apprehends only unity, desire is rooted out. *Karma* will therefore end and so, too, will transmigration with its attendant suffering. The prestige, indeed the triumph of knowledge in this soteriological scenario, is evident. So, too, is the differentiation between knowledge and "action." It is *jñana* alone that delivers from *kama* and *karma.*

As the One, however, Brahman and, therefore, Atman cannot be known.6 Just as Brahman is unseeable and unhearable, so too is it unknowable in any conventional fashion. No distinction between the knowing subject and the "object" known is possible here. Any conventional knowledge is hence precluded by the very nature of Atman/Brahman itself. How then can the inherently unknowable be known?

This apparent dilemma is resolved in *the jñana-kanda* by a double motion in which traditional, discursive, and ritual forms of knowledge are dramatically devalued, sometimes even rejected. Such knowledge is perceived in this tradition to be not only a "lower" knowledge, but also a false and deceptive knowledge. From the perspective of liberation it is, in fact, no knowledge at all. With this criticism of conventional and ritual knowledge

emerges the triumph of a mystical or experiential knowledge, a gnosis in which the Atman/Brahman identity is directly apprehended in the innermost being of man. Such "higher" knowledge is inexpressible in conventional categories and prompts one to choose the *via negativa* of Yajñavalkya's *"neti neti."* The tradition of esoteric knowledge which permeates the Brahmanas finds its culmination in this liberating knowledge of that which is unknowable. The higher knowledge praised in the *jñana-kanda* does not, however, simply lead to liberation. Strictly speaking, it *is* liberation. In this equation of *jñana* and *moksa*, then, lies the ultimate triumph of knowledge.

The road to liberating knowledge was, however, difficult to pass over. It required introspection and meditation. The value of meditation and cognitive "brooding" (*abhi-tap*)was certainly not a discovery of the *jñana-kanda.* There is a long tradition evident here. As knowledge of the Atman/Brahman identity became equated with liberation, however, meditation assumed a new and growing significance. The mystics who gave birth to the *jñana-kanda* valued meditation above sacrifice just as they valued knowledge above all. Dwelling in the forest, they lived on the fringe of society just as they lived on the fringe of orthodoxy. Their lineage is a long one, bringing to mind the *munis* of the *Rg Veda.* These forest-dwellers who sought liberation were not only mystics; they were also and relatedly ascetics. It was, in fact, their asceticism that facilitated their meditation. It was their asceticism that paved the road to liberation.

As demonstrated, the orthodox sacrificer clearly engaged in ascetic acts as a preparation for ritual celebration. His period of asceticism, however, although often lengthy, came to a clearly demarcated end at the *Avabhrtha.* Asceticism for the *yajamana* was not a life-style. He did not make a career of *askesis.* For the forest-dweller, however, in his ongoing quest for *moksa,* asceticism was indeed a way of life. Despite the resistance that Brahmanic orthodoxy demonstrated toward "full-time" asceticism, the goal that these mystics pursued and the means they employed could not be long ignored. In time, a compromise and assimilation took place with the gradual formation of the *asrama* system. Two life-stages were eventually created to supplement or complete the existing stages of student and householder. Having met the obligations and tasted the pleasures of being a student and a householder, the twice-born could move on to an ascetic career in stages three and four. Asceticism as a life-style thus found a place in the orthodox fold. Particularly in the Sastra literature the four *asramas* and the duties associated with each are clearly articulated by the orthodox lawgivers.

Just as a fully ascetic life-style was at first seen as something alien to the "career" of the *grhastha-yajamana,* so too was the goal of liberation initially seen as something quite distinct from the traditional and often worldly aims of

the sacrificing householder. And just as the *jñana-kanda* so frequently praised knowledge at the expense of ritual, so too did it often praise *moksa* at the expense of more worldly values. 7 But just as an ascetic life-style found its place in the *asrama* system, so too did *moksa* find its place as the fourth and culminating goal of life. No longer standing in opposition to *artha, kama,* and *dharma, moksaalong* with the ascetic life-style it requiredfound a place in the orthodox fold. In the Sutra and Sastra literature the value of *moksa* is increasingly recognized by the orthodox lawgivers, even if, at times, somewhat begrudgingly.

Vedic scholars invariably note that with the emerging belief in *punarmrtyu* and *samsara* a pessimism falls over India. The extent of this 'pessimism' is, however, unclear. Where some scholars see a gentle mist of ennui, others see a dark and impenetrable gloom. The Vedic texts themselves are hardly consistent in giving expression to this mood. One thing, however, appears clear. With the pessimism of *samsara* came also the optimism of *moksa.* The *jñana-kanda* in particular frequently gives expression to an ebullient joy. For the meditating mystic who apprehends the cosmic unity and knows himself to be one with it there is clearly the bliss that is Brahman itself. To speak, therefore, of a pessimism that negates the world is misleading. What these texts emphasize is, rather, an optimism which affirms ultimate reality and one's solidarity with it. Relatedly, the ascetic endeavor which led to a knowledge of Brahman can hardly be termed gloomy as it so frequently is. If the Brahmanas give expression to a sacrificial celebration, then the Upanisads most certainly give expression to an "ascetic celebration."8

The Vedic watershed between *karma and jñana* may, and often must, be regarded as an historical watershed. The significance of knowledge is dramatically enhanced by the new worldview and soteriology first articulated in the early Upanisads. The great prestige of a saving knowledge that delivers from transmigration is something new in Vedic thought. To speak then of the emerging superiority of sacred knowledge over ritual action is to speak historically, and the watershed between *karma* and *jñana* thus separates two periods in time. This watershed is, however, not simply or essentially historical. It is also and fundamentally structural. As stated, *karma* and *jñana* become the respective foci of two movements or trends in Vedic religion, culminating later in the *karma-marga* and the *jñana-marga* respectively. The divergence of these two trends thus constitutes a watershed not so much *in* time but rather *through* time. Long after the early Upanisads praise knowledge and question ritual, the Srauta Sutras give expression to sacrificial celebration. Long after Yajñiavalkya glorifies the forest ascetic, *Manu* praises the householder above all.

The tradition and spirit of the *karma-kanda* was at first challenged by the

innovations of the *jñana-kanda.* This took place on many fronts. Traditional ritual and its rewards were challenged by a saving knowledge. The prestige of priest and sacrificer was challenged by ascetics of the forest. Asceticism in service to sacrifice was challenged by asceticism in service to meditation. Asceticism of limited duration was challenged by asceticism as a life-style. The value of worldly goals was challenged by a pessimism regarding *samsara.* The value of "individual" existence was challenged by a salvation beyond specificity. The value of *karma* was challenged by a

salvation beyond action and the value of *dharma* was challenged by a salvation beyond conventional morality.

In time, however, the orthodoxy and orthopraxis of the *karma-kanda* met these challenges. The result has been termed the Brahmanic(al) synthesis. In point of fact, however, it was not so much a synthesis of the two trends as it was the absorption of one tradition by the other. The orthodoxy of the *karma-kanda* found room for the innovations of the *jñana-kanda* and brought them into its fold. A continuing resistance, uneasiness, and ambiguity are, however, often evident. Although an ascetic life-style is recognized as the road to *moksa*, the householder *asrama* is glorified in the legal literature. Although *moksa* is cited as the culmination of Vedic values, *dharma* invariably remains primary in the law books. Although knowledge is lauded, ritual action remains paramount in the Srauta Sutras. Despite the elitist goal of *moksa*, the priesthood and its constituency still sought rainfall, fertility, pleasure, success, and a repertoire of worldly ends.

The early Upanisads with their emphasis on a saving knowledge often sought to differentiate their soteriology from that presented in the ritual literature. Relatedly, they often differentiated their road to salvation from the road associated with the sacrificial endeavor. More specifically, the early Upanisads differentiate between sacrificial or ritual asceticism and that associated with a forest life-style and liberating meditation. *The jñana-kanda* hence draws a distinction between what it perceives to be two different types of asceticism. The orthodoxy of the *karma-kanda,* however, despite its resistance to innovation, is continually concerned with accommodation, assimilation, and incorporation. As a consequence, it sought often to equate or to identify rather than to differentiate. More specifically, it sought to establish an homology or identity between an ascetic life-style or career and the sacrificial endeavor. This unifying effort is already evident in the Brahmanas and is continually visible in the later Dharma Sutras and Dharma Sastras. Recognizing the inclinations of the *jñana-kanda* to differentiate and the *karma-kanda da* to assimilate helps explain much "inconsistency" in the Vedic literature. We

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shall consider first (chapter 6) the effort of the early Upanisads to differentiate the ritual asceticism of the *yajamana* from the contemplative asceticism of the forest-dweller. Thereafter (chapter 7), we shall consider the effort of the more orthodox *karma-kanda* to assimilate and homologize the ascetic life-style and the sacrificial endeavor.

Six
Tapas, Knowledge, and Liberation

Tapas and Knowledge in the Principal Upanisads

The significance of *tapas* in the principal Upanisads appears at first glance to be inconsistent, even contradictory. More specifically, the importance of *tapas* as a means of "knowing" Atman/Brahman and thereby attaining release from transmigration is sometimes explicitly devalued and at other times explicitly elevated. It is possible and perhaps helpful to discuss this "inconsistency" from an historical point of view, as for example, Deussen, Keith, and many scholars since have done. Such an historical approach has, in fact, become the conventional way of dealing with the issue. Simply stated, these scholars suggest that in the earliest Upanisads, specifically the *Brhadaranyaka* and the *Chandogya*, the significance of *tapas* is devalued. As we move toward later Upanisads, however, *tapas* progressively gains in significance. As Keith suggests, from the time of the *Kena Upanisad* onwards the value of *tapas* for obtaining knowledge of Brahman is "absolutely recognized and sometimes insisted upon." 1 By the time of the *Maitri Upanisad tapas* is very highly praised: "If one does not practice *tapas,* there is no success in [attaining] the knowledge of Atman"2 and, thereby, escape from transmigration.

Despite the apparent acceptability of this historical approach to the problem, however, it leaves a number of important questions unanswered. Why, for example, is *tapas* already highly praised in some of the earliest Upanisads?3 Why is it devalued in some of the later Upanisads? Why do certain Upanisads simultaneously devalue and praise *tapas?* More

importantly, the

critical issue of what exactly the term *tapas* refers to when it is used in the principal Upanisads has not received the attention it requires if the significance and intention of *tapas* in these texts is to be understood.

The impression left by most discussions is that the term *tapas* when used in the principal Upanisads has but one meaning. From this point of view, then, what changes in the texts is not the nature of *tapas* but simply its significance. The assumption that the term *tapas* always refers to the same set of activities is, however, false. I suggest, therefore, the necessity of recognizing two rather different forms of *tapas* within the principal Upanisads. One can, I believe, refer to both a "higher" and a "lower" form of *tapas* in this context. These forms of *tapas* are different from each other as regards the practices implied and, more importantly, the goals attainable thereby. The historical approach is essentially correct in suggesting that *tapas* is at first devalued and then progressively praised. What it fails to articulate, however, is that the *tapas* which is devalued in the earlier Upanisads must be differentiated from that *tapas* which is later praised as essential.

My use of the terms *higher* and *lower* to designate these two rather different forms of *tapas* is not arbitrary. *The jñana-kanda* itself differentiates, as indicated, between a 'higher' and a 'lower' form of knowledge, a distinction very much related to the present issue. The differentiation between higher and lower is, in fact, rather common in the Upanisads. 4

As demonstrated, *tapas* or ascetic activity formed an integral part of the sacrificial ritual. Sacrifice constituted the very heart of Vedic orthodoxy, and in the ritual literature the performance of such sacrifice is always accompanied by *tapas.* The nature and place of asceticism at the sacrifice will not be recapitulated here.5 Suffice it to say that by means of ascetic activity the *diksita-yajamana* generates *tapas* or sacred heat within himself. In this state of *tapas* (i.e., heat), generated through *tapas* (i.e., ascetic activity), the sacrifice may be performed. In fact, throughout the sacrificial scenario, the *tapas* of the sacrificer is progressively increased or strengthened through continuing acts of asceticism. At the conclusion of the sacrificial scenario the *tapas* that has been accumulated by the sacrificer is removed at a concluding bath, the *Avabrtha.* In short, performance of the sacrifice is inconceivable without accompanying ascetic activity designated by the term *tapas.*

It would be an exaggeration to suggest, as was at one time done, that the early Upanisads constitute such a dramatic break with the ritual literature which preceded them that the traditional, external sacrifice is actually eliminated. It is, however, as noted, unmistakably clear that the principal Upanisads at first and throughout devalue conventional sacrifice or attempt to transcend the traditional sacrifice by means of new and other forms of activity

which are perceived to have greater, even exclusive, claim to soteriological efficacy.

In this context, then, the first part of a double-edged thesis may be offered: The *tapas* devalued in the principal Upanisads is that *tapas* or ascetic activity which had been traditionally associated with conventional, *external* sacrifice. It should come as no surprise that if sacrifice is devalued with regard to soteriological efficacy, then the *tapas* traditionally associated with sacrifice should also and coordinately be devalued. It is this *tapas*, associated with external sacrifice, that, from the perspective of the Upanisads, I have referred to as a 'lower' *tapas.* This form of *tapas* is now associated with such traditional duties as almsgiving, study of the Veda, and the presentation of gifts to the sacrificial priests. It is, in short, a form of *tapas* firmly rooted in the realm of *karma* or worldly deeds. It is a *tapas* conducive to *dharma* and thereby to improving one's future state *as an individual* either here or in the beyond. It is, then, progressively and understandably devalued under the impact of the new worldview and soteriology advanced in the Upanisads.

With the emergence of the belief in transmigration, one's highest goal according to the *jñana-kanda* is no longer to generate good *karma* or to improve one's lot as an individual, but rather, as noted, to transcend conventional morality and the karmic round by attaining a direct awareness of Atman/Brahman. One relatedly realizes the limiting quality of all *karma*, of all individuality, and attains release from transmigration itself. The second aspect of our thesis may then be simply stated: The *tapas* that is exalted in the principal Upanisads is a form of *tapas*, different from the first, associated

not with traditional sacrifice and conventional mortification but rather with meditation and, relatedly, with a direct knowledge of reality itself. It is this meditative *tapas*, this "cognition-centered" *tapas* that I have designated by the term *higher*.

It is in the principal Upanisads alone that a distinction between two forms of *tapasa* higher and a loweris so evident. Relatedly, it is only in these texts that *tapas* is viewed through so critical an eye. This is not, however, a criticism of *tapas* in general, but only of that 'lower' *tapas* traditionally associated with sacrifice and a 'lower,' ritual knowledge. The 'higher' *tapas*, associated with the 'higher' knowledge of Atman/Brahman, is hardly subject to criticism. It is, rather, highly praised.

Turning to the literature itself, it becomes clear that certain passages associate *tapas* with sacrifice and "work" (i.e., *karma*)and that other passages *differentiate tapas from* sacrifice, associating it rather with meditation and liberating knowledge. The first form of *tapas*, which is repeatedly devalued, is also associated with the householder and the "village." The second

form, which is generally praised, is rather associated with knowledge, meditation, an ascetic life-style and the "forest."

At *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 2, 4, 1-2, Yajñavalkya declares his intention of leaving his present place in society, his state of householdership. Relatedly, he renounces his obligation to perform sacrifice. He "wanders forth" as an ascetic (*muni*), and becomes what is later to be designated a *vanaprastha*, a forest hermit. This he does for the explicit reason that sacrificial performance made possible through wealth 6 provides no hope for 'immortality,' as it does according to the ritual literature. Quite obviously, however, as an ascetic (*muni, vanaprastha*)one practices *tapas*. In fact, the *vanaprastha asrama* is explicitly characterized by the practice of *tapas*.7 It appears clear, then, that this form of *tapas*, practiced in the forest, is not at all devalued, but rather encouraged as opposed to that form of *tapas* associated with the sacrifice and, relatedly, with the householder and the "village."

In a related fashion, *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 4, 4, 22 differentiates those who perform sacrifice and practice *tapas* from those who leave their homes and become mendicants or ascetics. As Nikhilananda observes in his commentary: "Those who desire to attain the World of the Self [i.e., Atman] must renounce their homes, that is to say, must abstain from all rites [i.e., sacrificial ritual]."8 Relatedly, *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 6, 2, 15-16 contrasts those ascetic men of knowledge who live in the forest with those men who perform sacrifice and practice austerity (i.e., *tapas)*. The former will escape transmigration; the latter will not. Here, clearly, the asceticism associated with the forest is to be differentiated from that asceticism associated with sacrifice, and only the latter is devalued.

Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 1, 5, 16 clearly differentiates between the "world of the fathers," a less than optimal condition attainable through *karma*, or sacrifice (as Hume translates the word in this passage),9 and the optimal "world of the gods," or immortality, which is attainable only through *vidya* (knowledge or meditation). Relatedly, then, *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 3*, 8, 10 states that "if one performs sacrifices and worship and undergoes austerity [i.e., *tapas]* in this world for many thousands of years, but without knowing that Imperishable, limited indeed is that (work [i.e., *karma])* of his."10 Again, the *tapas* here devalued is clearly associated with sacrifice and *karma*. It is differentiated from knowledge and the pursuit of knowledge through appropriate asceticism. In a similar fashion but even more dramatically, *Chandogya Upanisad 5*, 10, 1-3 explicitly differentiates between those who know, those who practice *tapas* in the *forest*,11and those who, "living in the *village*, perform sacrifice, undertake works of public utility, and give alms." The former escape transmigration; the latter do not. Here *tapas*, explicitly associ-

ated with the forest, is by no means devalued and must be differentiated from that form of *tapas* associated with sacrifice, which is.

That a 'higher,' soteriologically effective *tapas* must be differentiated from a 'lower,' ineffective form is evident in *Kausitaki Upanisad*. At 2, 5, sacrifice, equated in the passage with *karma*, is declared to be not only limited but even unnecessary. By implication then, that form of *tapas* traditionally associated with sacrifice and relatedly *karma* is also

devalued. The passage also differentiates between the ineffectual sacrifice and true knowledge. At the conclusion of 1, 2, however, *tapas* is equated with truth (*satya*), not sacrifice, and is by no means devalued. The *Mundaka Upanisad* is even more striking in this regard. Here again, within the same Upanisad, two distinct forms of *tapas* are evident. At 3, 1, 8, *tapas*, associated with *karma*, is not only devalued but again differentiated from soteriologically efficacious knowledge, a knowledge that is awareness of Atman:

> He [i.e., Atman] is not grasped by the eye nor even by speech nor by other sense-organs, *nor by tapas nor by karma*, but when one's (intellectual) nature is purified by the light of knowledge (i.e., *jñana-prasada*)then alone he, *by meditation*, sees Him [i.e., Atman] who is without parts. 12

Mundaka 1, 1, 9, however, states that *"tapas* consists of knowledge (i.e., *jñana*)*,"* or even more pointedly, as Radhakrishnan suggests, *"tapas* is knowledge."13 The latter *tapas* is clearly what we have designated as the 'higher;' the former, relatedly, the 'lower' form of *tapas*. *Mundaka Upanisad* 1, 1, 4-5, which directly precedes the last-cited passage, even further justifies our distinction when it notes: "There are two kinds of knowledge to be known, as indeed the knowers of Brahman declare-the higher (*para*)as well as the lower (*apara*)*."*14 The lower knowledge, as the text explicitly states, consists of the ritual literature as opposed to the higher knowledge "whereby the Imperishable is apprehended."15 *Mundaka* 3, 1, 5, also speaks of a 'higher' asceticism which grants knowledge of the absolute:

> This Soul (Atman) is obtainable by truth, by *tapas*, by proper knowledge (*jñana*). . . Within the body, consisting of light, pure is He Whom ascetics (*yati*), with imperfections done away, behold.16

Note again that in this passage there is no association of *tapas* with sacrifice. *Mundaka Upanisad* 1, 2, 7 reads:

> Unsteady [i.e., unsafe], verily, are these boats of the eighteen *sacrificial forms*, which are said to be inferior *karma*. The deluded who delight in this as leading to good, fall again into old age and death.17

These people abide "in the midst of ignorance" (1, 2, 8), thinking themselves learned. They are the doers of deeds *(karma)* "who do not understand." "Thinking sacrifice and merit is the chief thing . . . they re-enter this world." 18 The passage, however, continues:

> [But] they who practice *tapas and faith in the forest*, the peaceful *knowers* who
> live on alms,
> Depart passionless through the door of the sun,
> To where is that immortal person, e'en the imperishable Spirit (Atman).19

Our thesis is again clearly demonstrated in the *Prasna Upanisad*. At 1, 9-10 two paths are distinguished, one leading to reincarnation, the other to escaping therefrom. Those who think that "sacrifice and merit are our work" will be reborn. "But they who seek the Soul (Atman) by *tapas*, chastity, faith, and knowledge" will "not return."20 We observe again here the clear distinction between the 'higher' *tapas*, associated with knowledge on the one hand, and the performance of sacrifice on the other.

The soteriological significance of the higher (i.e., meditative) *tapas* has, I believe, been made clear. As a consequence, only one further example will be presented. *Maitri Upanisad* 4, 3-4 states:

> If one does not practice *tapas*, there is no success in the knowledge of the Soul
> (Atman). . . For thus has it been said:
> "Tis from *tapas* that *sattva* [i.e., purity of consciousness] is obtained, and from
> *sattva* that understanding (i.e., *manas*)is obtained, and from *manas* the Atman is
> obtained, on reaching whom, no one returns."
> "Brahman is!" says he who knows the Brahman-knowledge.
> "This is the door to Brahman!" says he who becomes free of evil by *tapas*.
> "Om is the greatness of Brahman!" says he who, completely absorbed, *meditates*
> continually. Therefore, by knowledge (i.e., *vidya*), by *tapas*, and by meditation
> (i.e., *cinta*)Brahman is apprehended.21

As Eliade in particular has demonstrated, man's religious activity is frequently modelled after the paradigmatic activity of the gods. We, too, have continually illustrated this theme. There is very often a cosmogonic model for human behavior. It follows then, that should a change occur at one of these interrelated levels, there will be a corresponding change at the other level as well. In the context of our present discussion, then, if the *tapas* or ascetic activity associated with sacrifice is devalued and in large measure supplanted in *the jñana-kanda* by a more cognitive, meditative *tapas*, as we have demonstrated, then a corresponding change is to be expected at the cosmogonic level as well. This is in fact the case.

Prior to the Upanisads, *tapas* at the cosmogonic level was frequently associated with bodily exertion or mortification (√*śram*). As we have seen, it was relatedly associated with sacrifice. This is most evident in the creative activities of the god Prajapati, who is the personification of the sacrifice, indeed, the sacrifice itself. Because Prajapati performs asceticism, the sacrificer on earth, who is repeatedly identified with Prajapati, must also perform asceticism at the ritual. We illustrated at length the intimate relation between sacrifice and asceticism at both the ritual and the cosmogonic level. 22 *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 5, 1,1, for example, states:

> Verily in the beginning, Prajapati alone existed here. He thought within himself, "How can I be propagated?" He toiled [√*śram*]to weary one's self] and practiced *tapas* [*tapo' tapyata*]. He created living things.23

Just as Prajapati "mortifies" or "wearies" himself at the cosmogonic level, so too does the sacrificer at the ritual level.

Because the early Upanisads stand in clear continuity with the preceding ritual literature, we at first find Prajapati, sacrifice, and physical exertion evident in cosmogonic scenarios of the early *jñana-kanda. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 1,2, 6, for example, in describing the creation of the world, observes:

> He [i.e., the creator] desired: "Let me sacrifice further with a greater sacrifice!" He tortured [√*śram*] himself. He practiced *tapas*. When he had tortured himself and practiced *tapas*, glory and vigor went forth.24

The presence of sacrifice at the cosmogonic level becomes increasingly rare in the principal Upanisads. This is beyond question related to their criticism of traditional, external sacrifice. As numerous passages make clear, esoteric knowledge of the ritual is far more important than the actual performance. Significantly, however, *tapas* in the Upanisads retains its great importance at the cosmogonic level. In fact, *tapas* continues to function as the primary vehicle of creation. This is true even in the earliest Upanisads. In this regard, it is noteworthy that proponents of the "historical" thesis ignore a problem inherent in their interpretation. How could *tapas*, even in the early Upanisads, retain a crucial place at the cosmogonic level and be simultaneously devalued at the human level? In point of fact, *tapas* per se is devalued at neither level. What is devalued at both levels is only what we have called the 'lower' *tapas,* that is, *tapas* associated with the traditional conception of sacrifice. The form of *tapas* now in evidence at the cosmogonic level is one less and less associated with external action, bodily exertion (√*śram*), and fatigue. It is rather a

form of *tapas* increasingly associated with "actionless" meditation and mental concentration.

Just as the significance of knowledge by no means makes its first appearance in the Upanisadsone need consider here only the continual importance of the terms *ya evam veda* ("he who knows thus") and *evam vidvan* ("knowing thus") in the Brahmanasso too the meditative form of *tapas* has its origin in an extremely old connotation of the word, namely, to "brood," as does a bird over its eggs. As indicated, *tapas* as early as the *Rg Veda* was seen as a form of "hatching heat," a biologically creative warmth. It is this biological 'brooding' that is progressively transformed into a cognitive, meditative, intellectual 'brooding.' This transition is most conspicuous in the Upanisads. The brooding process becomes progressively more abstract, and specific references to an egg virtually disappear. This form of *tapas* may, however, be heuristically differentiated from that form associated with traditional ascetic activity, bodily exertion, external privation, and sacrifice. An implicit distinction thus becomes explicit in the *jñana-kanda.*

Prajapati remains a major cosmogonic figure in the Upanisads, but not in his own right. Rarely associated now with sacrifice, he is frequently equated with Atman or Brahman. He becomes a mythological or personified way of speaking

about Atman/Brahman which in its "unknowable," unchanging, impersonal, and ultimate nature would not be susceptible to description. By retaining Prajapati as a symbolic equivalent of Atman/Brahman, the Upanisads may speak mythically of things which, strictly speaking, transcend a mythological world of differentiation. Prajapati as Atman/Brahman thus continues to perform many of his previous activities but these now take place in a more cognitive, unmoving, unchanging manner in keeping with the character of the Atman which he portrays. Descriptions of his cosmogonic creativity increasingly utilize the term *abhi*-√*tap*, which has rightly been translated as "to brood upon." Thus, for example, *Chandogya Upanisad* 2, 23, 3 declares:

> Prajapati brooded *[abhi*-√*tap]* upon the worlds. From them when they had been brooded upon, issued forth the three-fold knowledge [i.e., the Veda]. He brooded upon this. From it, when it had been brooded upon, issued forth the syllable *Om.*

Abhi-√*tap* has here the clear connotation of intense meditation. 25 The relationship between cosmogony and ontology on the one hand and epistemology on the other will be discussed shortly. Suffice it to say here that the most passive or unmoving connotation of *tapas*, namely the heat or warmth re-

quired for the hatching of eggs, is used continually in the Upanisads. It implies the least possible amount of physical, external action in keeping with the changeless nature of Atman itself.

In the earliest Upanisad, the *Brhadaranyaka,* the significance of a meditative or higher *tapas* at the cosmogonic level is already evident. At 1, 5, 1, the Father (i.e., Prajapati) creates not through *sacrifice and tapas* but rather through *medha*, that is, *"intellect,"* 26or *"knowledge"*27 and *tapas (medhaya tapasa janayat).* The relation between *abhi*-√*tap* or brooding and knowledge is also evident at *Chandogya Upanisad* 4, 17, 1-3. Prajapati brooded [*abhi*-√*tap*]upon the worlds. As they were being brooded upon, he extracted their essences: fire from the earth, wind from the atmosphere, the sun from the sky. Upon these three deities he brooded. As they were being brooded upon, he extracted their essences: from the fire, the *rg* verses; from the wind, the *yajus* formulas; the *saman* chants from the sun. Upon this threefold knowledge he brooded.

In an increasing number of cosmogonic passages Prajapati is no longer mentioned at all. Atman/Brahman completely takes over his previous role. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 1, 4, 1, for example, reads: "In the beginning this world was Atman alone. "28 The cosmogonic scenario of *Mundaka Upanisad* 1, 1, 8-9 observes that "by *tapas* Brahman expands (*ciyate*)*"* or increases.29 Radhakrishnan translates the line: "By contemplative power Brahman expands," noting that "contemplative power (or *tapas)* is the energy by which the world is produced."30 The passage goes on to declare that Brahman is all-knowing, and that his *"tapas* consists of knowledge (i.e., *jñana*)*."* Clearly again, *tapas* is associated not with external acts, bodily mortification (√*śram*), or sacrifice, but rather exclusively with knowledge and "unmoving," internal contemplation. Already at *Taittiriya Brahmana* 2, 2, 9, 1-10 and *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 5, 3, 3, the cosmic and primal mind (*manas*)is characterized by the practice of *tapas* which enables the cosmic mind to "expand."

We have indicated the correlation between cosmogonic paradigm and human activity. The meditative, cognitive, 'brooding' *tapas* evident at the cosmogonic level finds its earthly counterpart in the meditative brooding and introspection of the ascetic Brahman-knower himself. This correlation is rooted, finally, in an even more fundamental correlation: that between ontology and epistemology. The meditative *tapas* through which the ascetic "knows" Atman/Brahman is fundamentally not distinguishable from the meditative *tapas* which characterizes ultimate reality itself. In keeping with the monistic viewpoint often evident in the early Upanisads, it is appropriate to say that the meditative *tapas* and knowledge of the ascetic grants understanding of Atman/Brahman for the very reason that Atman/Brahman consists of meditative

tapas and knowledge. Through *tapas* and knowledge one is aware of Atman/Brahman, which is itself *tapas* and knowledge. The means of "knowing" is one with the "object" to be known. This may be stated even more dramatically:

The meditative *tapas* of the ascetic is not simply a means of apprehending ultimate reality; it is ultimate reality itself.

Brhadaranyaka 2, 4, 12 declares that the "Great Being" itself (i.e., *maha bhuta*, ultimate reality) "consists of nothing but knowledge (*vijñana-ghana*)" 31 or, as Nikhilananda translates, "is Pure Intelligence alone." At *Kausitaki Upanisad* 3, 2, ultimate reality is described as *"prajñatman, "* as the Self which is knowledge, or the "Intelligent Self." Relatedly then, *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 4, 4, 19 and Katha Upanisad 4, 2 observe that by mind or mental power (*manas*)alone is "It" to be perceived or attained. At *Mundaka Upanisad* 1, 1,9 *tapas* is presented as an inherent characteristic of ultimate reality, or Brahman, and this *tapas "is jñana* (i.e., knowledge)"32 or "consists of knowledge.""33 At *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 8, the Atman, sought by ascetics who practice *tapas* in the forest, is itself described as "all-knowing" and as "giving forth *tapas."*34

Of great significance in the present context is *Taittiriya Upanisad* 3, 1-5. Bhrgu approaches his father, wishing to understand Brahman. His father, Varuna, instructs him to perform *tapas:*

> He said to him: *"Through tapas seek to know Brahman. Brahman is tapas."* He performed *tapas*. Having performed *tapas* he understood that Brahman is mind (i.e., *manas*). . 35Having understood that, he again approached his father, Varuna, and said, "Declare Brahman, sir!" Then he said to him: *"Through tapas seek to know Brahman. Brahman is tapas."* He performed *tapas.* Having performed *tapas*, he understood that *tapas* is understanding (*vijñana*).36

The means of knowing is identical with the "object" to be "known."

Significant also is *Svetasvatara Upanisad* 1, 15-16, which states that Atman (= Brahman) is the root or foundation of self-knowledge *(atma-vidya)* and *tapas.*37 The passage may also be translated to read that Atman is rooted in self-knowledge and *tapas.*38 In either case, the ontological dimension of *tapas* is clear. The relation of epistemology to ontology is evident in the same passage when it declares that "the Atman is apprehended in one's own soul if one looks for Him [i.e., the Atman] with truth and *tapas.*39 At *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 6, the Atman, which here itself performs *tapas,* is equated with the Real *(satya),* and at *Kausitaki Upanisad 1, 2, satya* is actually equated with *tapas* itself. Relatedly, *Katha Upanisad* 2, 15-16 may state that it is by means of *tapas* (here practiced by man) that Brahman (= Atman) is proclaimed.

Already at *Taittiriya Brahmana* 3, 12, 3, the "supreme and self-existent Brahman" is equated with *tapas,* and at *Aitareya Brahmana* 3, 6 *tapas* is declared to be the cosmic support or foundation of Brahman.

Tapas is not a symbol for Brahman in the Upanisads as is, for example, *prana* (vital breath) or *vayu* (cosmic breath or wind). It is as *sat, cit,* and *ananda* will become, an inherent trait or characteristic of Brahman. Brahman and *tapas* are often seen as inseparable. In keeping with the monistic perspective so prevalent in the Upanisads, 40 we may conclude that when *tapas*, as ontological "ground," is apprehended through *tapas* as meditative power, it is *tapas* which "knows" itself through *tapas.*

Homology, Meditation, Liberation

The Upanisads, as indicated, present neither a systematic nor a single philosophy. Various metaphysical views are offered and developed. A dualistic theism is, for example, articulated in the *Isa* and *Svetasvatara* texts. This theology suggests its own road to salvation and, in so doing, prefigures the *bhakti-marga* of a later period. The most conspicuous trend in the early Upanisads is, however, toward monism. For Uddalaka and Yajñavalkya in particular there is but one ultimate reality. All plurality and diversity are but a manifestation of the One. This single, cosmic foundation is articulated as the Atman/Brahman identity. Knowledge of this ultimate identity brings with it liberation from all desire and suffering. Just as the perception of diversity binds one to death and rebirth, so the perception of unity liberates one therefrom. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 4, 4, 19 declares:

> There is on earth no diversity.
> He gets death after death,
> Who perceives here seeming diversity.41

Relatedly, *Katha Upanisad 4*, 10-11 states:

> Whatever is here, that is there.
> What is there, that again is here.
> He obtains death after death
> Who seems to see a difference here.
> By the mind, is this [realization]
> to be attained:
> There is no difference here at all!42

A later Upanisad states: "Being a knower . . . he reduces everything to unity in the supreme Imperishable." 43 This soteriological process of reducing plurality to unity is well illustrated at *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 3, 9, 1-9. Sakalya asks Yajñavalkya how many gods there are. The latter responds by saying, "three hundred and three, and three thousand and three (i.e., 3,306)." When asked the same question again, Yajñavalkya reduces the number to thirty-three. He progressively reduces the number to six, to three, to two, to one and one half, and ultimately to one. When asked to explain how so many gods are, in truth, but one, Yajñavalkya explains that the larger numbers represent only the differentiated powers of The One. This One, as Yajñavalkya concludes, is Brahman.

The search for unity, the reduction of the many to the One, does not, however, begin with the Upanisads. It is evident already in the *Rg Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. *Rg Veda* 10, 81 and 82, for example, praise Visvakarman, the "All-Maker" who fashioned the universe. He is described as the "One Alone" (10, 82, 2), and as That One which contains all existent being (10, 82, 6). *Rg Veda* 10, 121 already praises Prajapati (v. 10) as the "One Lord" of existence who produced and supports heaven and earth. Relatedly, *Rg Veda* 10, 90 glorifies Purusa, the cosmic man, as the source and foundation of all. *Atharva Veda* 19, 53 and 54 suggest that Time (Kala) is the Primal One. *Atharva Veda* 9, 2 and 19, 52 suggest rather that Desire (Kama) is supreme and firstborn. Of particular interest is *Atharva Veda* 4, 1, 1 where *brahman*, as holy and articulated word, is described as the womb of both the existent and the non-existent.

This search for a Primal One is closely related to the Vedic propensity for establishing identities or homologies between apparently distinct entities. Like the quest for a Primal One, however, the process of establishing identities is evident already in the *Rg Veda*. One of the most conspicuous and significant illustrations is found in *Rg Veda* 1, 164. Although obscure, this hymn clearly expresses a search for "That One" which underlies all plurality and activity. It is devoted to the Visvadevas, that is, "All-the-gods" perceived as a unity. This unity is referred to as the neuter Ekam Sat, or "That One" (v. 6 and 10), which supports all reality. The role of identities in the search for unity is evident. The celebrated forty-sixth verse states:

> The seers give many names to that which is only one. They call *it* Agni, Yama, Matarisvan.

Relatedly:

> They call it Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, or it is the Solar-bird.

The apparent diversity of multiple gods is here recognized as only a matter of words. The multiplicity of name and form is reducible to the One through successive identifications. The words of *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 18 seem already applicable here: "Being a knower . . . he reduces everything to unity in the supreme Imperishable."

Rg Veda 2, 1, 3-7 illustrates again the Vedic propensity for establishing or, better, *recognizing* identities and the related search for the One.

> You, O Agni, are Indra, the bull, (strongest) of all that exist; you are the wide-striding Visnu, worthy of reverence; you, O Lord of the Holy Word (Brahmanaspati), are the chief priest. . . You, O Agni, are King Varuna, whose laws are firm; you are Mitra, the wonderworker to be revered; you are Aryaman, the reliable lord. . . You,

O Agni, are Rudra, the Asura of lofty heaven. . . 44

Of particular significance are *Atharva Veda* 10, 7 and 10, 8. Both hymns praise Skambha, literally the cosmic "support," or foundation of all. Skambha contains within himself all aspects of reality. Indeed, within him "are both the non-existent and the existent" (10, 7, 10). More importantly, the process of "reducing multiplicity to unity in the supreme Imperishable" is once again evident here. For example, the thirty-three gods become one in Skambha (10, 7, 13), as are the opposites of death and immortality united in him (10, 7, 15).45 The hymns to Skambha clearly prefigure the ultimate Atman/Brahman identity of the Upanisads. In verse after verse (vv. 32-36) of 10, 7, Skambha is equated with the "supreme *brahman"* and at 10, 8, 43 and 44 Skambha clearly appears to be identified or equated with the true Self, the Atman, "known to Brahman-knowers."46

The quest for homology or identity (*nidana, bandhu, upanisad*)finds its Vedic culmination in the ultimate identity between Atman, or essential Self, and Brahman, or cosmic foundation. Personal apprehension of that identity is, however, not easily attained. One does not simply jump from a perception of plurality to one of ultimate unity. Experiental awareness of such unity can only be attained *progressively* through meditation. It is through the meditative endeavor that one finally reduces everything to unity. More specifically, the content of meditation is calculated to demonstrate in a direct manner the virtual "illusion"47 of all distinction and diversity. By meditating upon progressive identities, one is led, in a process of ongoing reduction, to the final identity of self and cosmos, Atman and Brahman. Progressive meditation upon identities culminates in the ascetic's realization that the many are the One and that "he is that."

The specific content of such progressive meditation is found within the *jñana-kanda* itself. In addition to dialogues and metaphysical inquiries, the

Upanisads contain prolonged passages which must be regarded as subjects for meditation. Like the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas before them, the Upanisads contain portions which are best described as "mini-manuals" 48 of meditation. The identities or homologies elaborated therein are clearly to be meditated upon-'brooded upon'-until they are not merely comprehended but experientially apprehended as true. The term *brooded upon* is, of course, used advisedly here, for it is *tapas* in its meditative dimension that facilitates the desired gnosis.

We stated above that for the *jñana-kanda* performance of external sacrifice was viewed critically and often devalued. Yet the sacrifice, beyond any doubt, plays a dominant role in the Upanisads. This is evident already in the *Brhadaranyaka*. Here we find prolonged reflection on the Horse Sacrifice, which plays a significant role in the ritual literature. This attention to sacrifice is not surprising; the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* is a continuation, indeed a part of the *Satapatha Brahmana*. What is significant, however, is that for this Upanisad, the Horse Sacrifice is no longer an external act to be performed; it is rather a subject for meditation. One 'broods' upon the Horse Sacrifice; one performs it in the mind alone.49 In this regard *tapas* is "again" tied to sacrifice. But the change is clear. It is here the meditative, the "higher" *tapas* which is now linked to sacrifice. This sacrifice, however, is "performed" not as an external endeavor, but rather as one that is contemplative, cognitive, and interiorized.

It is, in fact, precisely the component parts of the sacrifice which play the crucial role in the progression of identities calculated to lead the ascetic to the final reduction of all plurality in the Imperishable One. A seemingly endless series of homologies connecting man and the cosmos invariably finds the sacrifice as middle term. The ultimate anthropo-cosmic homology is thus made possible largely through the meditative speculations surrounding the sacrifice. This is again the culmination of a long Vedic tradition and demonstrates clear continuity between the ritual literature and the *jñana-kanda*. Man is homologized through a series of intricate identities with the sacrifice, but the sacrifice is, in turn, homologized-again through a series of intricate identities-with the cosmos. As in the *karma-kanda*, the sacrifice must be regarded as a great conceptual loom in which and through which all levels of reality are interwoven. In the *karma-kanda* the mantras, as suggested, serve as the shuttle within this loom.50 The shuttle according to the *karma-kanda* might also be seen as the officiating priests and participating sacrificer who, in their ritual actions, weave the microcosm and macrocosm together. In the Upanisads, however, it is the ascetic, the 'brooding' forest-dweller who,

through his meditative *tapas,* is the shuttle in the loom. The early Upanisads suggest that the ascetic need no longer perform external sacrifice. Through his meditations upon the sacrificial identities, however, he weaves distinctions together until they stand revealed as the *moksa-granting* One.

The homologies of man and sacrifice presented in the principal Upanisads are well-known; limited illustrations will therefore suffice. *Chandogya Upanisad* 3, 16, for example, homologizes a person's entire life with a Soma Sacrifice:

> Verily, a person is a sacrifice [i.e., *puruso vava yajñah*]*:* His (first) twenty-four years are the morning Soma-libation. . . The (next) forty-four years are the midday libation. . . The (next) eight years are the third libation. . .

Chandogya Upanisad 3, 17, 1-5 states:

> When one hungers and thirsts and abstains from pleasure that is the *Diksa.* When one eats and drinks and enjoys himself-then he performs the *Upasad* ceremonies. When one laughs and eats and performs sexual intercourse-then he joins in the Chant and Recitation. *Tapas,* almsgiving, uprightness, *ahimsa,* truthfulness-these are the gifts for the priests. . . Death is the *Avabhrtha.* 51

Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 6, 2, 12 states:

> Man is, indeed, a sacrificial fire. . . The open mouth is its fuel, breath is the smoke, speech is the flame, the eye is the coals, the ear is the sparks.

In the second *prapathaka* (chapter) of the *Chandogya Upanisad* we find the fivefold *saman* chant that accompanies the sacrifice homologized not only with man but also with multiple aspects of the cosmos. In this manner, man is ultimately homologized with the cosmos through meditation upon the identities of the chant. Thus, for example:

> The mind is a *Hinkara* (i.e., Preliminary Vocalizing).
> Speech is a *Prastava* (i.e., Introductory Praise).
> The eye is an *Udgitha* (i.e., Loud Chant).
> The ear is a *Pratihara* (i.e., Response).
> The breath is a *Nidhana* (i.e., Conclusion).52

Or further:

> Hair is a *Hinkara.*
> Skin is a *Prastava.*

> Flesh is an *Udgitha.*
> Bone is a *Pratihara.*
> Marrow is a *Nidhana.* 53

With the fivefold chant as meditating term, man is then homologized with the sacrificial fire:

> One rubs the fire sticks togetherthat is a *Hinkara.*
> Smoke is producedthat is a *Prastava.*
> It blazesthat is an *Udgitha.*
> Coals are formedthat is a *Pratihara.*
> It becomes extinctthat is a *Nidhana.*54

Yet we are also told:

> The earth is a *Hinkara.*
> Fire is a *Prastava.*

The atmosphere is an *Udgitha.*
The sun is a *Pratihara.*
The sky is a *Nidhana.*55

And that:

The Spring is a *Hinkara.*
The Summer is a *Prastava.*
The Rainy Season is an *Udgitha.*
The Autumn is a *Pratihara.*
The Winter is a *Nidhana.*56

With the ritual chant as mediating term, man is ultimately homologized with the cosmos and the year.

Consider also *Chandogya Upanisad 5,* 18, 2, in which once again man, sacrifice, and cosmos are homologously interwoven:

> The brightly shining (heaven) is indeed the head of that Universal Atman. The manifold (sun) is his eye. That which possesses various paths (i.e., the wind) is his breath. The extended (space) is his body. Wealth (i.e., water) is indeed his bladder. The support (i.e., the earth) is indeed his feet. The sacrificial area is indeed his breast. The sacrificial grass is his hair. . . 57

Finally, the sacrifice need no longer serve as intermediary or mediating term and man is homologized directly with the cosmos, reducing the final "subject-object" duality to the One. In the *Taittiriya Upanisad,* for example, component parts of the cosmos (e.g., earth, atmosphere, heaven, quarters of heaven, fire, wind,

homologized with the component parts of the individual (e.g., the *prana* breath, the *vyana* breath, the *apana* breath, sight, hearing, mind, speech, touch, skin, flesh, muscle, bone, marrow). 58 The anthropo-cosmic homologies of *Rg Veda* 10, 90 in many ways find a soteriological culmination in these and other "meditation-homologies" of the Upanisads.

The eternal Brahman lies beyond time and change. Because the Atman is one with Brahman, no change is possible in their "relationship." Liberation, therefore, does not entail the Atman becoming one with Brahman. It rather entails the *realization* that they have always been one and the same. As a consequence, when man is "liberated," he does not "go anywhere." The only movement or change that takes place is a cognitive one. It is, of course, precisely for this reason that knowledge and knowledge alone can play such a fundamental role in Upanisadic soteriology. Relatedly, because Atman/Brahman lies beyond time and change, there can, strictly speaking, be no cosmogony in those portions of the *jñana-kanda* that present a monistic perspective. There can be no creation myth that in some way describes a world of plurality emerging out of a primal unity. There can be no distinction between a creator and creation. And yet even those sections of the Upanisads that propose a strict monism repeatedly present such cosmogonies, just as did the entire Vedic tradition before them. The Upanisads, however, through the meditations that they present, attempt to lead the ascetic "backward," against the ongoing current of creation until the primal unity, the One-without-a-second which existed "before" time is "again" attained, and the ascetic is "again" connected to that atemporal One. The only 'movement' that takes place, however, in the pluralization of reality (which is mythical creation) and the reduction of all reality including man back into that Primal Unity, is a cognitive one.

The Upanisads are by no means unique in demonstrating this double movement, which might be termed "mythological pluralization" and "cognitive unification." Indeed, the Upanisads are rather the final articulation of this double movement which has characterized Vedic thought from the beginning. The concern with cognitive unification lies at the heart of all Vedic homologies. It is in the Brahmanas, however, that this dual movement of mythological pluralization and cognitive unification is most clearly seen. No sooner does the Primal One, invariably Prajapati, give birth to phenomenal pluralities expressed in his becoming disjointed and hence creating the world, than the Vedic mind sets to work by means of the cognitive homologies to equate bit by bit all phenomenal plurality until the Primal One is again 'built up' as a unity. Ritually this manifests itself most dramatically in the piling of

the fire altar in which the dismembered Prajapati is again reconstituted and the sacrificer as Prajapati is himself reborn into this unity.

In the Upanisads, Prajapati continues as the Primal One, but invariably he appears, as demonstrated, only as a symbol for the Atman. By positing the Atman as the Primal One of the beginning, the atemporal and essential man is already located in the Primal Unity. He need but realize through meditation that this is, indeed, the case. As indicated, this meditation consists essentially of homologizing the pluralities of the cosmos, sacrifice, and man-until all plurality is seen as an expression of the One and the ascetic apprehends that it is he who "was" there in the beginning:

> I [as Atman] am the first-born of the world-order (i.e., *rta*),
> Earlier than the gods, in the navel of immortality! 59

> He who has found and has awakened to the Atman . . . he is the maker of everything, for he is the creator of all;
> The world is his: indeed, he is the world itself.60

The Vedic search for homology, connection, and identity culminates in the meditation which liberates. In only apparent paradox, to be liberated is really to be 'connected.' It is precisely he who meditatively knows these 'connections' who is himself ultimately 'connected.' He is, in his liberation, bound and woven inextricably into the primal fabric of the One.61

Seven
The Emergence and Development of Brahmanic Asceticism

Heuristic Models

Discussing her methodological approach, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty states: "In order to see the shape of a myth, one has to shine light on it from as many different sides as possible in order to illuminate its . . . various surfaces; in this way one establishes what philosophers of science term the 'robustness' of the objective structure by showing that it is visible from a number of perspectives." 1 These words may be well applied not only to the study of myth but also to an investigation of Vedic and Brahmanic asceticism. The emergence and development of ascetic and renunciatory life styles in ancient India is a complex issue and thereby best illuminated from varying perspectives. O'Flaherty approaches myth with a "toolbox of pluralism"2 containing various methodological instruments, each with its own particular manner of apprehending a myth. Relatedly, an investigation of Brahmanic asceticism is greatly aided by considering a number of heuristic models, each illuminating the issue from a particular perspective. Such models often conflict with each other in theory. But O'Flaherty's words, although pertaining to mythological studies, may again be applied to our present concern: "Problem-solving techniques that are logically incompatible may be used in tandem as long as one is willing to make one's own diagnosis, to take the responsibility for choosing the 'right one,' on each separate occasion, rather than choosing a single one, once and for all, as a matter of principle."3

A particular model for comprehending the relationship between ritual and

renunciation emerges implicitly but clearly in the writings of Madeleine Biardeau. This is particularly evident in her extensive contribution to the work coauthored with Charles Malamoud, *Le Sacrifice dans l'lnde ancienne.* 4 Biardeau here singles out sacrifice as being the most significant aspect of Vedic culture, the unifying and organizing principle of its socioreligious life. She then moves beyond the Veda into Hinduism, using sacrifice as the "unifying theme to organize the confusing richness of Hindu religious thought and practice."5 The model which emerges from Biardeau's study is,

therefore, one of sacrifice as a protean and ever-expanding concept, capable of engendering and embracing the variegated aspects of Vedic and post-Vedic Hinduism. Because of its protean and embracing quality, sacrifice itself is able to establish a continuity between diverse and often opposing elements within the socioreligious complex. Working from this perspective, Biardeau is able to demonstrate great continuity in areas where it has frequently been overlooked.

A number of her observations are particularly pertinent in the present context, bearing as they do upon the relationship between the institutions of sacrifice and renunciation. In her discussion of the *Pranagnihotra* (the inner sacrifice performed in the fires of breath) Biardeau highlights the continuity between the traditional or external sacrifice of the *yajamana* and the ongoing sacrificial concerns of the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin*.6 The practices of the renouncer are seen therefore not in opposition to the orthodox institution but rather as an extension or modification of it. In a similar fashion, she is able to demonstrate continuity between the second and third *asramas* by observing that the "five great sacrifices" (*pancha mahayajñas*) were essential in both life-stages. In fact, Biardeau's discussion of the *vanaprastha* shows how the forest hermit could serve as a transitional figure, bridging the institution of sacrifice as upheld by the *grhastha* with the renunciatory "sacrifice" of the *sannyasin*.7 Relatedly, Biardeau points to the practice of purification which links the *yajamana* to the renouncer. The *sannyasin*, because he inadvertently kills minuscule creatures, requires purification as does the *yajamana*, who takes the life of the sacrificial victim.8

In her ongoing attention to language, Biardeau has effectively demonstrated how critical Vedic terms go through a process of "semantic evolution"9 or how they resonate on a "double register,"10 thereby again maintaining continuity within the tradition. The term *purusa*, for example, refers not only to the victim at the primordial sacrifice, but also to the *grhastha* of the second stage and the cosmic ground sought by the yogi and world renouncer.11 Likewise, the term *brahman* ties the sacrificial endeavor of the *grhastha* to the soteriological goals of the *sannyasin*, designating as it does the ultimate "foundation" in both realms.12 So also the term *tyaga*

establishes a continuity between the traditional sacrifice and the *sannyasin*. With the *tyaga-recitation*, the *yajamana* "abandons" or "renounces" the fruits of the sacrificial endeavor, thereby prefiguring the ultimate renunciation (*tyaga*)of the *sannyasin*. 13 Likewise, the term *santi* refers both to the "peace" of the victim at the sacrifice and to the peace of the renouncer, thereby establishing and maintaining continuity between the two realms.14

Biardeau's model, despite its evident heuristic value, is not without its limitations. But that is virtually inevitable. Illuminating a tradition from a particular perspective invariably leaves certain phenomena in the shadows. Heesterman therefore suggests that sacrifice may indeed be too limited a rubric under which to subsume the variegated aspects of Hinduism.15 One might relatedly observe that the increasing significance of knowledge in the Vedic period, particularly in the Upanisads, is not always well served when comprehended solely from the perspective of the sacrifice. Biardeau's model, with its focus on continuity, is less inclined to apprehend the tension and conflict so often conspicuous in the tradition. Heesterman, for example, observes the evident gap between the practice of *himsa* inherent in the sacrificial ritual and the observance of *ahimsa* which characterized the life of the renouncer. The purifying endeavors of both *yajamana* and *sannyasin* which Biardeau observes cannot close this gap. Moreover, Biardeau's model appears unconcerned with what O'Flaherty calls the "deep-seated anti-asceticism" in orthodox Hinduism.16 With her insistence on continuity, Biardeau highlights how the tradition of renunciation grew rather naturally out of the *grhastha asrama*. The model thereby is less concerned with the effort required by the orthodox tradition to assimilate innovative and often challenging beliefs and practices. The Veda most certainly demonstrates continuity. The issue is often whether that continuity emerged rather smoothly and naturally from within or whether it was diligently put in place despite reluctance, resistance, and ambiguity. Although Biardeau characterizes renunciation and sacrifice as the two poles of Hinduism,17 she clearly stresses the continuity rather than the tension between them.

Frits Staal, in his magnum opus, *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*,18has made a major contribution to Vedic studies by documenting in meticulous detail a 1975 performance of the *Agnicayana* in southwestern India. The author supplements his description of that performance with extensive introductory material in which he not only traces the origins of the ancient ritual but also views with a critical eye many of the traditional interpretations of the classical rite. The two-volume work sheds great light not only on the ancient *Agnicayana* but, more evidently, on the phenomenon of "modern-day Vedism." Moreover, as Brian K. Smith has observed, Staal, in

his theoretical considerations, has effectively demonstrated the "hierarchical nature of Vedic ritualism." 19 By emphasizing the structure of the rite, Staal has taken us far in appreciating its internal logic, its obedience to rule, and its complex and hierarchical symmetries.

In *Agni,* as well as in other publications,20 Staal advances an hypothesis, suggesting that Vedic ritualindeed, all ritualis "meaningless." Although the term *meaningless* may be needlessly provocative and phrases such as *partly meaningless*21 and *almost meaningless*22 are less precise than one might hope, the overall hypothesis advanced by Staal is reasonably clear and certainly controversial.23 Reflecting on the 1975 performance, Staal asserts that those participating in the twelve-day ritual were so immersed in performing their appropriate tasks that there were "no symbolic meanings going through their minds."24 Even though the 1975 rite was performed as part of a living tradition, these modern participants were "not concerned with meaning" either during the performance or at any other time.25 On the basis of these and similar reflections, Staal concludes that both the 1975 performance and the ancient rite are "meaningless." For Staal, ritual is a "doing" pure and simple; any attempt to understand action in terms of symbolic significance is a methodological cul-de-sac.26 Ritual, according to Staal, is performed "for its own sake." It is "self-contained and self-absorbed."27 It is a realm of pure activity with no relation to the world outside its cultic enclosure. Its aim is not to impact upon the world beyond its boundaries; it is, therefore, "useless."28 Its only concern is adherence to its own rules of performance.29 It has no symbolic significance and no mythological paradigms of any relevance. Ritual is a "closed" structure which may be "abandoned or preserved"30 but never changed. Although Staal occasionally implies that Vedic rituals originally *had* a meaning,31 my overall impression is that the author does wish to claim universal applicability for his hypothesis. We can therefore ask in what way Staal's thesis and the methodological implications that emerge from it help us to better understand not only continuity and change within Vedic ritual but also the relationship between the ritual and other aspects of Vedic religion, particularly ascetic life-styles and renunciation.

Staal contends that the Vedic "science of ritual" is embodied essentially, indeed exclusively, in the Srauta Sutras.32 The Brahmanas and other interpretive endeavors have no place in such a scientific tradition. Staal has shown that the Brahmanas, in their effort to interpret the ritual or provide the manual performance with some transcendent or symbolic significance, all too frequently contradict themselves or otherwise fail in their task. As a consequence, Staal's model effectively ruptures any real continuity between "mantra" and "brahmana," between recitation and explanation. In his attempt to

exclude symbolic significance from the ritual, the author also ruptures any relationship between mythological paradigm and ritual act, observing, for example, that "Vedic rites are, in general, not related to any myths." 33 Quite clearly, Staal's model and that of Biardeau part company here. Biardeau would, no doubt, argue that Vedic continuity rests largely upon an internal and ongoing reevaluation, reinterpretation, and revalorization of activity, terminology, and symbolic significance. Staal's model clearly approaches the issue from a completely different perspective. For Biardeau, sacrifice is an ever-changing *concept.* For Staal, ritual is a never-changing *action.*

The model which emerges from Staal's hypothesis is that of two disparate realms. The ritual realm is a closed, changeless, 'meaningless' structure with no symbolic significance. This ritual realm apparently demonstrates no continuity with the 'open,' protean, and 'useful' aspects of Vedic culture. If Vedic ritual is, indeed, useless, meaningless, and changeless, how are we to understand its *relationship* to any Vedic institution characterized by change, usefulness, and meaning? This question is not a criticism of the heuristic model that emerges from Staal's work. It simply requires an answer. There are, indeed, more developed models which postulate a somewhat similar bifurcation and yet contain within themselves the possibility of perceiving relationship or dialectical interchange between opposing realms. Staal's approach appears to leave the dilemma not only unresolved but also uninvestigated. The relationship between ritual asceticism and the asceticism of the *sannyasin* is, for example, unexplored and perhaps unexplorable within Staal's framework. By confining himself so largely to the Srauta literature, Staal has, in fact, virtually nothing to say about the variegated and protean forms of *tapas* or ascetic activity at the ancient rite. In fact, he opines that "Vedic ritual has no close links" with post-Vedic Hinduism, nor with such *post-Vedic* innovations as "ascetic practices."34

The eminent Indologist J. C. Heesterman has also generated a model which contains an explicit bifurcationan "unbridgable gap"35between Vedic Srauta ritual and the mundane world which surrounds it. Unlike Staal, however,

Heesterman discusses in detail how and why the ritual became a "closed system" of impotent prestige and meaningless transcendence.36 Heesterman's attempt to understand the relationshipor lack of relationshipbetween myth and ritual also moves well beyond the more abbreviated statements of Staal. Although Heesterman in his recent works resonates with Staal by stressing the 'meaninglessness of the ritual,'37 the mytho-cultic identities of the Brahmanas are of clear significance in this author's model.38 Disagreeing with Staal, Heesterman states: "Identification based on equivalences of cosmic and ritual elements is indeed the premier intellectual tool of

the Vedic 'science' of ritual. It enabled the ritualists to construct a closed mechanistic universe to be controlled and directed by the ritual." 39

Despite his affinities with Staal, Heesterman's perspective also aligns itself with that of Biardeau, in that both models affirm the continuity between sacrificial endeavor and renunciation. In fact, Heesterman, more emphatically than Biardeau, asserts that renunciation as a life-style is the logical, indeed, inevitable outgrowth of ritual objectives. Heesterman's model, more complex than that offered by either Staal or Biardeau, implicitly affirms both the static and dynamic40 dimension of ritual.

The Srauta rite, for Heesterman, is a self-contained,41 transcendent realm of perfect order, guaranteed success, unsullied purity,42 and unchanging grandeur. It is also a realm with no utilitarian benefit and no connection with the world of turmoil, change, and uncertainty surrounding it on every side.43 But it was not always so. The Vedic myths still bear witness to a period in which the sacrifice was very much a part of the worldly sphere including its struggles and violence. Heesterman observes that the enemies of the ritual, so conspicuous in myth, were once the flesh and blood adversarial partners in an "agonistic," indeed life-threatening, ritual combat.44 The agonistic and, therewith, precarious sacrifice was, however, changed in what Heesterman regards as a dramatic ritual reform.45 The sacrifice was removed from the realm of turmoil and enshrined unchangingly in its own sacred enclosure. This reformation yielded, relatedly, a sacrifice which was both "individualized" and "desocialized."46 It no longer performed a public function, serving now only the individual, the *yajamana*, for whom the rite was performed. Pointing to the mythical scenarios in which Prajapati overcame death, Heesterman sees the paradigm of the *yajamana's* own autonomy.47 The *yajamana*, like the sacrifice itself, unifies all opposites through mytho-ritual identities or connections.48 Stepping out of the conflict-ridden and mundane world, the *yajamana* could, therefore, enter for a time the sacrificial enclosure and enjoy the transcendence afforded him by the ritual vehicle.49 As an individual the *yajamana* fashioned his own transcendence.50 With its attained perfection the ritual lost all connection with the mundane order; and the *yajamana-or* more correctly, Heesterman's "ideal Brahmin"-achieved his autonomy and transcendence only by turning his back upon the world of change and conflict.51 There is then an unbridgeable gap and tension between the ritual and reality. But, suggests Heesterman, that gap is bridgeable by the ideal Brahmin who, as an individual, may voluntarily choose to move from one realm to the other.52 "Janus-faced,"53 the ideal Brahmin renounced the world during the ritual and returned to it at the rite's conclusion.

The autonomy of the *yajamana* was, however, not yet complete. Al-

though delivered from his dependence upon a rival which characterized the agonistic sacrifice, he found himself still dependent upon the officiating priests. It is for this reason that Heesterman regards the *Pranagnihotra*, the internal sacrifice of the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin*, as the inevitable outcome of the ritual quest for individuality and autonomy. 54 From this perspective, the permanent renunciation of the *sannydsin* is the inevitable end-point of the ideal Brahmin's quest for transcendence.55 Turning his back upon the world, not only temporarily but permanently, the *sannyasin* disengaged himself from the "opposites" of the mundane order.56 In his quest for purity, the ideal Brahmin must break all relations with the impure social realm. Quoting Heesterman: "Ideally, the Brahmin should stand outside of society, the highest Brahmin being the one who has no power or wealth or even provisions for the next day, and who performs the ritual in and for himself alone."57 But herein lies one of the many paradoxes which Heesterman throws into relief. By turning his back upon the world, the *sannyasin* may speak to it. Because he is disengaged from the world, he may engage himself with it. Again the unbridgeable gap between the transcendent realm of renunciation and the mundane order is bridged by the individual, Heesterman's "ideal Brahmin." Quoting the author: "Having emancipated himself from the

world, the renouncer can from his sphere of independence reenter into relation with the world, where he now enjoys unequaled prestige.58

Heesterman's model is a bold and enriching one, unafraid of embracing the paradoxical aspects of Vedic and post-Vedic culture. In its own particular way, it stresses continuity as does Biardeau and also bifurcation as does Staal. For Heesterman, even moreso than for Biardeau, the *sannyasin's* renunciation appears to grow naturally, indeed, inevitably out of the Srauta rite of the *grhastha asrama.* Quoting the author: "It is often thought that the institution of renunciation emerged as a protest against brahmanical orthodoxy or that it originated in non-brahmanical or even non-Aryan circles. The theory of the four a*sramas,* or stages of life, would then have been an attempt at legitimizing the renunciatory modes of life and drawing them within the orbit of brahmanical orthodoxy. There is of course full scope for recognizing the influence of extraneous beliefs and practices, for instance, in the matter of various forms of asceticism. But the important point is that these influences do not seem to have made a decisive irruption in the development of religious thought. They seem rather to have fitted themselves into the *orthogenetic, internal development of Vedic thought."*59Heesterman's use of the term *orthogenetic* is significant here. His model clearly perceives the full-blown institution of renunciation as emerging naturally and in a "straight line"60 from within the orthodox tradition itself.

An alternative to this 'orthogenetic' model may be termed the model of "challenge and assimilation." We have employed it frequently in the present study as have Eliade, Dumont, Winternitz, Weinrich, Hopkins, and others in an effort to understand the emergence of Brahmanic asceticism and, in particular, the formation of the *asrama* system. Patrick Olivelle's meticulous essay, "Renouncer and Renunciation in the *Dharmasastras, "* 61leaves little doubt that the classical, four-fold life-stage scenario cannot be fully comprehended as an 'orthogenetic' development. The institution of renunciation, once alien to the orthodox conception of *dharma*, became the organizing motif of Dharma literature only gradually and in the face of clear resistance.62 Emphasis on continuity should, therefore, not blind us to the fact that practices and beliefs once alien to the orthodox system were in various ways incorporated. The final product emerges, then, not always orthogenetically, but often through a more dialectical process.63

An influential illustration of the "challenge and assimilation" model is already found in the now classic essay by Louis Dumont, "World Renunciation in Indian Religions."64 The author observes how Indian society and religion have "tended to absorb formerly heretical inventions."65 Dumont's particular concern here is the *sannyasin* and the manner in which his initially challenging conceptions ultimately enhanced the orthodox tradition, bringing to it invigorating perspective and creativity. In dependence upon a Weberian typology, Dumont highlights two quite distinct and "ideal-typical"66 individuals: the "man-in-the-world" and the "renouncer." Relatedly, the author poses a dramatic "dichotomy"67 or bifurcation between two disparate realms. One may remain in "the world" and thereby be denied any real individuality or one may turn his back upon that (sociocultural) realm, becoming thereby a renouncer and simultaneously, an "individual."68 Only the renouncer "thinks as an individual and this is the distinctive trait which opposes him to the man-in-the-world."69 Dumont perceives the ideal Brahmin as very much the man-in-the-world and not a renouncer at all.70 Quoting Dumont: "We must in fact make a distinction. The Brahmins, as priests superior to all other men, are comfortably enough settled in the world. On the other hand, it is well known that classically whoever seeks liberation must leave the world and adopt an entirely different mode of life."71 For Dumont, only the *sannyasin*, not the *yajamana*, may be described as the "extramundane individual."72 In generating a "system of opposites,"73 Dumont also juxtaposes the "worldly" values of *kama*, *artha*, and *dharma* against the *sannyasin's* "value," namely *moksa.*

Initially there was "hostility" to renunciation as a life-style.74 Relatedly, *moksa* was perceived as "fatal" to the other three values.75 But the "poles"

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of worldly life and renunciation may be seen as "complementary," 76 and in time a dialectical relationship emerged between them. The man-in-the-world "supports"77 the *sannyasin* and the *sannyasin*, in turn, provides for the manin-the-world alternative perspectives, new religious possibilities, the hope for individuality, and the promise of liberation. What is critical for Dumont is the growing "dialogue between the renouncer and the man-in-the-world."78 That "extraordinary post-Vedic and pre-Hindu" period beginning with the first Upanisads and ending with the *Bhagavad Gita* is seen by

Dumont as a "golden age of speculation in which emerge . . . the dominant tendencies of Hindu thought."79 The creative and fructifying force behind this process is the *sannyasin.* The author continues: "Rich and diverse as this movement appears, it is the work of renouncers."80 The emergence of Hinduism is therefore "a process of aggregation to orthodoxy of sannyasic values."81 To simplify: For Heesterman, the *yajamana,* the ideal Brahmin, "informs" the *sannyasin;* for Dumont, the *sannyasin* "informs" the *grhastha,* the "man-inthe-world."82 Quoting Dumont: "The man-in-the-world, and particularly the Brahmin, is given the credit for ideas which he may have adopted but not invented."83 Relatedly, "the true historical development of Hinduism is in the sannyasic developments on the one hand and in their aggregation [i.e., assimilation] to worldly religion on the other."84

An orthogenetic model which stresses continuity is often heuristically compatible with a model stressing challenge and assimilation. Each model has its own exploratory virtues. In fact, the emergence of Brahmanic asceticism and, relatedly, renunciation as an institution is perhaps so complex a process that neither heuristic approach should be excluded. Furthermore, an informative light is cast if we consider the issue not from the perspective of the second, third, and fourth a*sramas,* as is invariably done, but rather from the perspective of the first *asrama,* that of the *brahmacarin.* Our attempt to comprehend the final formation of the a*srama* system often favors the "challenge and assimilation" model. We have, however, consistently emphasized continuity where appropriate. The "meditations upon the sacrifice" found in the early Upanisads are a clear illustration. Relatedly, our entire explication of the connotations and denotations of *tapas* places primary emphasis upon continuity and change. In fact, we shall see how the final coherence of the *asrama* system owes much to those protean properties of *tapas.*

The *Brahmacarin*

The principal Upanisads, as demonstrated, sought to differentiate the meditative *tapas* of the forest-dweller from the sacrificial *tapas* of the

yajamana. The innovative *jñana-kanda* drew that distinction to help differentiate its gnostic path from that path articulated in the ritual literature. As indicated, however, the orthodox tradition reflected in the *karma-kanda* sought rather to accommodate, assimilate, and incorporate. More specifically, it sought to establish an homology or identity between the rather distinct *conceptual* 85 systems of sacrifice on the one hand and ascetic life-style on the other. Eliade, among others, has observed that the homology86 established between the two permitted the orthodox tradition to legitimize practices that at first had no connection with orthodoxy.87 The homology between asceticism and sacrifice, as Eliade goes on to note, permitted "even the most autonomous of ascetics and mystics to remain within the fold of Brahmanism."88 Brahmanic orthodoxy was thus expanded to both incorporate and legitimize certain ascetic practices that were initially unacceptable to the orthodox tradition. That incorporation or assimilation culminates in the creation of the fourfold as*rama* system.

When discussing the homology established between asceticism and sacrifice, Eliade, as others before him,89 cites the Brahmanas90 as being of paramount importance in this process. The assimilation of asceticism and sacrifice can, however, be demonstrated in other Vedic texts as well-often with significant and unexpected results. More specifically, the activities of the *brahmacarin,* the "Vedic student" as presented in the *Atharva Veda,* the Grhya Sutras, the Dharma Sutras, and the Dharma Sastras, greatly illuminate the emergence of Brahmanic asceticism. I suggest, in fact, that in the "career" of the *brahmacarin* an assimilation, indeed an homology, is effected between ascetic practice and the orthodox conception of sacrifice. Relatedly, I suggest that the *brahmacarin's* career is in large measure a forerunner *and* legitimizing model for the initially heterodox practices of ascetics later assimilated into orthodoxy as forest hermit *(vanaprastha)* and world renouncer *(sannyasin, bhiksu, pravrajita, parivrajaka, muni, yati).*91 The activities of the *brahmacarin,* clearly approved of by the orthodox tradition, thus helped prepare the ground by which the initially unorthodox activities of certain ascetics could be accepted into the Brahmanic fold. This was possible, in part, precisely because of the assimilation of asceticism and sacrifice in the career of the *brahmacarin.*

The Brahmacarin*: Archaic Heritage and Ascetic Career*

The as*rama* system developed gradually, attaining its most familiar form in the later legal literature.92 The *Manusmrti* and subsequent Sastras describe four distinct life-stages, or a*sramas,* through which the twice-born passes. One is first a *brahmacarin,* or student; then a *grhastha,* or householder; then a *vanaprastha,* or forest hermit; and finally a *sannyasin,*

one who renounces the

world, becoming a homeless wanderer. 93 Beyond doubt, the first life-stage, the *brahmacarya asrama*, was approved of by the orthodox tradition long before the third and fourth stages came into being. The *brahmacarin*, his activities, and his capabilities are already detailed in the *Atharva Veda*,94 and although the first extended literary reference to the student's initiation (*Upanayana*)is found in the *Satapatha Brahmana*,95 there can be no question, as scholars have demonstrated, that this initiation as well as other activities of the *brahmacarin* are of archaic origin.96 It is, in fact, possible to regard the *Upanayana* as "the Indian homologue to primitive puberty initiations,"97 as Eliade, Oldenberg, and Gonda have done.98 Further, many of the *brahmacarin's* activities at the *Upanayana* and during his as*rama* may be interpreted from an archaic point of view. More specifically, the austere practices of the student may be seen as taboos in the archaic sense, apotropaic rites designed to avert evil and the onslaught of demonic forces. They may be seen as forms of preventive magic. Fasting, maintaining silence, control of breath, remaining chaste, and other forms of austerity may be viewed from this perspective.99

The initiation and activities of the *brahmacarin* are, however, in their Vedic form more than simply the Indian equivalent of archaic practices. Generally speaking, puberty initiations allow the initiate to enter the stage of sexual maturity *and* sexual activity. In that one must undergo the *Upanayana* in order to enter Aryan society and eventually become a householder, this is also true in India. It must be stressed, however, that the *Upanayana* per se introduces the student not to sexual activity but rather to a prolonged period of sexual abstinence. *By definition*, the *brahmacdrin* is one who observes chastity, and this for *twelve years or more*.100 *Brahmacarya* presupposes sexual maturity but prohibits sexual activity. Although limited periods of chastity are observable in the puberty rites of archaic peoples,101 it is this dramatically *prolonged* period of asceticism that helps set ancient India apart from the most common archaic patterns.102 Relatedly, what were at one time apotropaic rites calculated to avert the attack of evil forces became in time ascetic techniques calculated to generate *tapas*, or "magical heat." This is true despite the fact that the two intentions sometimes overlap and are difficult to differentiate. The *brahmacarin* as conceptualized in the Vedic literature is clearly an ascetic of such developed form that he must be differentiated from virtually all of his archaic "equivalents." Nevertheless, his continuity with an archaic heritage is still evidenced by the fact that magical heat is itself a universal notion of primitive origin.103

That the *brahmacarin* is an ascetic has been evident throughout our study. The term *brahmacarya*, which refers to the entire student as*rama*,

carries the central meaning of chastity, which, as demonstrated, is clearly regarded as a form of *tapas*, as a form of ascetic activity. 104 *Tapas* and *brahmacarya* are, in fact, often viewed as being identical.105 The entire asrama may, therefore, be seen as an ascetic structure, the purpose of which is largely the creation of *tapas*. Perhaps the most striking example of the intimate correlation of the *brahmacarin* with *tapas* is to be found in hymn 11, 5 of the *Atharva Veda*, where the "Vedic student" is glorified in exaggerated fashion. It is no surprise that the domestic literature106 prescribes a portion of this hymn for use at the *Upanayana*. The brahmacarin protects the Brahmanic life with *tapas* (v. 10); he fills the world with his asceticism (√*śram*)and his *tapas* (v. 4); he alsoin exaggerated glorificationfills his teacher (v. 1) and the gods (v. 2) with *tapas*. Despite the exaggerated praise, there is no question that *in these verses* the term *brahmacarin* refers to the Vedic student.

One of the items that the *brahmacarin* receives at the *Upanayana* is a power-laden girdle (*mekhald*). The *Kausika Sutra*, in describing the tying of the girdle, specifically prescribes the use of *Atharva Veda* 6, 133 for this occasion. Herein (v. 4) the girdle is described as "born of *tapas"* (*tapaso 'dhi jata. . .*), and it is asked to grant *tapas* to the *brahmacarin*. The observance of several *vratas* (vows of austerity) by the Vedic student also indicates his concern with asceticism. The *brahmacarin* is, as a consequence, obligated to engage in such practices as fasting, prolonged silence, begging, isolation in the forest, remaining awake at night, sleeping on the ground, standing for prolonged periods and, of course, the observance of chastity. These *vratas*, often performed in the forest, frequently lasted as long as one year or more. The *Atharva Veda* at 10, 7, 11 already observed that the *vrata* or ascetic vow was maintained by *tapas*. The student's concern

with both *svadhyaya* (disciplined recitation of the Veda) and *pranaydma* (control of breath)107 also attests to his concern with the generation of *tapas.* Not only did *pransyama* very probably arise out of the attempt to create or increase inner heat or *tapas,* 108 but *svadhyaya* and *pranayama* are repeatedly and explicitly equated with *tapas* in the Vedic literature.109

The Brahmacarin*: Assimilation of Asceticism and Sacrifice*

Given the evident and ongoing concern of the *brahmacarin* with asceticism and the production of *tapas,* the entire a*srama,* as stated, may be seen as an ascetic structure. It is, however, simultaneously and in its entirety a sacrificial structure. The ascetic structure and the sacrificial structure are coterminous from *Upanayana* to *Samavartana* (i.e., the rite concluding the *asrama*). They are inseparable, and therefore, conceptually, asceticism and sacrifice are assimilated to each other. That the a*srama* constitutes a sacrificial structure is continually evident.

The a*srama,* for example, demonstrates a clear parallel to the scenario of the orthodox *srauta* sacrifice from *Diksa* (initiatory consecration) to *Avabhrtha* (concluding bath). The parallels are in fact striking. A few observations, however, are in order. Each scenario demonstrates a clear initiatory structure containing-to use the terminology of van Gennep-rites of "separation," rites of "transition," and rites of "incorporation." 110 At the *Upanayana* the student is *separated* from his pre-Aryan past and enters the sacred sphere of revealed wisdom. Striking symbolism indicates that he becomes an embryo and is spiritually reborn. Accompanying this rebirth the *brahmacarin* receives an animal skin (*ajina*), a girdle (*mekhald*), and a staff (*danda*). In parallel fashion, at the *Diksa* the sacrificer (*diksita*)is separated from the impure realm of man and enters the sacred realm of the gods. Again, graphic symbolism indicates that he becomes an embryo in preparation for spiritual rebirth. He also receives an animal skin, a girdle, and a staff. The entire *brahmacarya asrama* then constitutes the 'transitional' stage during which asceticism is practiced and *tapas* is generated through various rites. Likewise, the sacrificer in the transitional stage between *Diksa* and *Avabhrtha* performs various ascetic practices calculated to generate *tapas. Vratas* consisting of chastity, fasting, seclusion, periods of silence, and so on are evident in both ascetic and power-laden careers. After the transitional stage both *brahmacarin* and sacrificer are reintegrated or incorporated into normal existence. The *brahmacarin* bathes at the *Samavartana,* the *diksita* at the *Avabhrtha.* These waters remove the sacred *tapas* which has been accumulated in each case. Both *brahmacarin* and *diksita* have their hair, beards, and nails cut, removing the *tapas* from these parts of the body just as the bath removes *tapas* from the body in general.111 Both *brahmacarin* and *diksit*a place their respective skins, girdles, and staves into the waters of the final bath, leaving these *tapas-laden,* power-laden objects behind.112 The *Diksa* to *Avabhrtha* scenario, encompassing as it does the great Soma Sacrifice, is the very heart of Brahmanic orthodoxy. The evident parallel between this sacrificial structure and the ascetic structure of the *brahmacarya asrama* clearly reinforced the orthodoxy of the first as*rama,* enabling it also to be seen as a sacrificial structure.

That the entire *brahmacarya asrama* may be regarded as a sacrifice is also-and very strikingly-indicated by *Paraskara Grhya Sutra* 2, 2, 13, which states that at the *Upanayana* the *brahmacarin* "accepts the staff in the way prescribed for the *Diksa* because, it is said, 'He enters upon a long *Sattra* (sacrificial period).'"113 The homology is evident. It is extended by the *Baudhdyana Dharma Sutra:* "A long sacrificial session [i.e., *Sattra*]begins he who commences his studentship. That (night) in which, after being initiated, he (first) offers a piece of sacred fuel corresponds to the *prayaniya* [i.e.,

opening sacrifice]; that night in which (he offers it last), intending to take the final bath, corresponds to the *udayaniya* [i.e., concluding sacrifice]. Those nights which (lie) between (these two correspond) just to the nights of his sacrificial session." 114 Relatedly, at the *Upanayana* the *brahmacarin* receives his sacrificial cord with the mantra: "With the cord of sacrifice I invest thee;" and as a text declares, "Whatever a [Brahmin] studies wearing a sacrificial cord [i.e., *yajnopavita*], he really therein performs a sacrifice."115

That the ascetic structure of the *brahmacarya asrama* is simultaneously regarded as a sacrificial structure is also evidenced by the following. As indicated, the *brahmacarin* continually performs *svadhyaya* or recitation of the Veda. Now, *svadhyaya* is clearly a form of *tapas;* it is, in fact, often equated with *tapas,* as noted above.116 Recitation of the

Veda is, however, also a form of sacrifice; it is one of the "five great sacrifices" *(pancha mahayajñas),* namely, *Brahmayajña*, described in the Grhya Sutras. Recitation of the Veda rather than the traditional oblations constitutes the essence of this sacrifice. For example, *Asvaldyana Grhya Sutra* 3, 1, 3 states: "If he studies [or recites] (Vedic) texts, this is the sacrifice to Brahman." This same Sutra, in speaking of the *brahmacarin*, observes: "In that he recites the *Rks*, he thereby satiates the gods with oblations of milkin that (he recites) the *Yajus*, with oblations of gheethe *Samans*, with oblations of honeythe *Atharvan* and *Angiras* hymns, with oblations of Somathe Brahmanas, *Kalpas*, *Gathas*, *Narasamsis*, *Itihasas*, and Puranas, with oblations of ambrosia."117 Significantly, this passage does not regard *svadhyaya* as a form of sacrifice alongside the performance of the more conventional, external sacrifice; it actually equates the two. As Eliade has stated in a more general context, the practical consequence of establishing an homology between two things is substitution.118 *Baudhayana Dharma Sutra* 2, 6, 11, 7 states: *"Svadhyaya* is, indeed, the sacrifice to Brahman;" and *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 1,4, 12, 3 declares that *"svadhyaya* is a sacrifice at which the Veda is offered." *Svadhyaya*, therefore, being equivalent to both *tapas* and sacrifice, stands as a middle term permitting asceticism and sacrifice to be assimilated, indeed homologized, in the career of the *brahmacarin.*

Not only is *svddhyaya* regarded as equivalent to a sacrifice but so also is begging alms, another characteristic activity of the *brahmacarin. Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 1, 1, 4, 4, for example, observes that begging alms is a sacrifice performed daily by the *brahmacarin;* verses 1, 1, 3, 4344 declare that alms are equivalent to sacrificial food. The teacher who receives the alms from the student holds the place that the deity holds at the conventional sacrifice. The teacher also holds the place of the *Ahavaniya* fire at the sacrifice because a portion of the alms is offered in the fire of his stomach.

Begging is, of course, also a form of *tapas*. Therefore, like *svadhyaya*, it stands as a middle term between asceticism and sacrifice, permitting the two to be assimilated in the career of the *brahmacarin.*

The Brahmacarin *and "Later" Ascetics*

The *Diksa* to *Avabhrtha* scenario, encompassing as it does the great Soma Sacrifice, constitutes, as indicated, the very heart of Brahmanic orthodoxy. It might appear somewhat paradoxical, therefore, that the *brahmacarin's* career, which demonstrates such a striking parallel to this orthodox scenario, could, as I contend, function as a legitimizing model for what were originally heterodox activitiesthe ascetic life-styles of the later *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin.* Yet this is not paradoxical at all. Precisely because of this parallel, the orthodoxy of the *brahmacarin's* activities were reinforced, and they could, therefore, function as a legitimizing model for the often similar activities of these ascetics. The *brahmacarin* thus serves in certain ways not only as a forerunner of the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin* but also as a legitimizing or validating model through which their ascetic careers could be accepted into the orthodox fold. Once the ascetic practices of the *brahmacarin's* career came to be regarded as a "sacrifice" in the synthesizing efforts of the orthodox tradition, a groundwork was created whereby the often similar activities of ascetics later called *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin* could be validated. A consideration of the four as*ramas* and their formation should make this contention clear.

The antiquity of both the *Upanayana* and the *brahmacarin* is evidenced by *Atharva Veda 11*, 5, which already attests to such features as the "initiation" (*upa-ni*)of the student (v. 3), embryonic imagery of rebirth (ibid.), bringing fuel (v. 4), the black antelope skin (v. 6), the girdle (v. 4), the begging of alms (v. 9), letting the hair grow (v. 6), and, most significantly, the practice of asceticism or *tapas* (vv. 1, 2, 4, etc.). Gonda has observed that already at the time of the *Atharva Veda* "studentship" was an institution "not unlike that minutely described in the *grhyasutras."* 119 Relatedly, Kane has suggested that the activities and characteristics of the *brahmacarin* described in the Brahmanas are, no doubt, older than the composition of those works.120 There is, in fact, a reference to the *brahmacarin* as early as *Rg Veda* 10, 109, 5,121 and, as noted, the *Upanayana* is probably of archaic origin.

The acceptance of the *vanaprastha* and the *sannyasin* as orthodox lifestyles and the system of four successive *asramas* are, however, far more recent. Initially only the careers of student and householder existed.122 Eventually, however, despite orthodox resistance to asceticism as a life-style, the third and fourth a*sramas* were added to the original two. What has been

called the "deep-seated anti-ascetic tradition in orthodox Hinduism" 123 is, however, often evident during this process. *Aitareya Brahmana* 33, 11, for example, asks: "What (use is there) of dirt, what use of antelope skin, what use of (growing) the beard, what is the use of tapas? O! *Brahmanas!* desire a son, he is a world that is to be highly praised."124 Although the third and particularly the fourth as*ramas* were, therefore, at first a great challenge to the Brahmanic system,125 they were eventually assimilated into the orthodox tradition. Patrick Olivelle has effectively demonstrated that in the early legal literature the four as*ramas* were not yet regarded as temporary "stages" but rather as "permanent vocations."126 Shortly after the *Upanayana*, the twiceborn was permitted to *choose* any one of the four *asramas* as a lifelong career. As Olivelle rightly observes, however, choice or option always proved problematic for Brahmanic legalism.127 Moreover, this possibility of choice seriously threatened the Vedic institutions of marriage, householdership, and ritual sacrifice. With *Manu* and all later legal theorists, therefore, the earlier system was replaced by the "classical" system of four *successive* stages.

The first clear indication of the third as*rama* is found in the *Chandogya Upanisad,*128where it is specifically and exclusively characterized by the practice of asceticism (i.e., *tapas*). At this period the third and fourth a*sramas* were still apparently undifferentiated.129 In the Dharma Sutras and Sastras, however, the four life-stages are clearly described, although the third and fourth asramas-progressively assimilated into orthodoxy-are still not spoken of as highly as the *brahmacarya asrama*, which meets with the full approval of the orthodox lawgivers, as it always had. The following similarities between the career of the old *brahmacarin* and the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin* demonstrate, I believe, that the former is in certain ways a forerunner of the latter two and could therefore serve as a legitimizing model through which they were eventually assimilated into the orthodox, Brahmanic fold. We consider first the *vanaprastha.*

As indicated, the first clear reference to the third as*rama* simply and specifically characterizes the *vanaprastha* as one practicing *tapas.* In the Sutra and still later Sastra literature he is repeatedly regarded as a *tapasvin. Visnu*, for example, states that the *vanaprastha* must "dry up his frame by the practice of *tapas;"*130 and *Manu* observes that the *vanaprastha* should continually "increase (the rigor of) his *tapas."*131 Throughout the Brahmanic literature, it is precisely *tapas* that characterizes the career of the *vanaprastha* just as it had in the earliest reference to that as*rama* in the *Chandogya Upanisad.* Suffice it to say that the *vanaprastha*, exactly like the old *brahmacarin* described in the *Atharva Veda* and the Grhya Sutras, is a *tapasvin.*

The *brahmacarin* was obliged to spend prolonged periods of time in proximity to the fire, both tending it with fuel and reciting in its presence, 132 so that the *tapas* or heat of the fire was imparted to the student.133 From the time of the *Atharva Veda* on, the student also had a very close relation to the sun.134 *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 26, for example, clearly establishes an homology between the two. The sun, like the fire, imparts its *tapas*, or heat, to the student. Throughout the *brahmacarya asrama*, the *brahmacarin* must subject himself to the heat of the sun and recite in its presence.135 Now, the *vanaprastha* practices asceticism by standing in the midst of the so-called five fires, the five forms of *tapas* (*pañcha tapansi*), namely, four fires lighted in the four quarters and the blazing sun overhead.136

The *vanaprastha* is literally "one who stays in a forest." Now, the *brahmacarin* had always spent crucial periods of his Vedic study and recitation in the forest. 137 In fact, his entire education was clearly a "forest education."138 Like the *brahmacarin* before him,139 the *vanaprastha* must beg alms.140 So also, like the Vedic student, he must keep his hair, his beard, and his nails uncut.141 He must also fast for progressively shorter or progressively longer periods142 and always abstain from such things as salt, garlic, honey, fish, flesh, and sour gruel as did the *brahmacarin.*143

Like the Vedic student,144 he must sleep on the ground.145 So also the *vanaprastha* must be devoted to the study and recitation of the Veda, as was the student, and when not reciting, he must observe silence.146 And, quite significantly, the *vanaprastha* must also lead a life of complete continence,147 this sexual abstinence still, of course, termed *brahmacarya* as it had always been for the *brahmacarin.*

That the *brahmacarin* serves as a legitimizing model for the *vanaprastha* is perhaps nowhere more clearly demonstrated than at the initiation that the *vanaprastha* undergoes upon entering the third *asrama.* This initiation is clearly, and sometimes consciously, modeled upon the *Upanayana* and makes it evident that the *vanaprastha* remains a part of Aryan society despite his ascetic life-style. The striking similarity of the two initiations, both of which should take place in the spring,148 can be demonstrated most simply by quoting a small portion of the lengthy instructions for the rite presented in the *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra*. Not only are the instructions *identical* with those given for the *Upanayana*, but the author

of the Sutra is evidently quite aware that this initiation is modeled on that of the student:

> To the west of the fire he now should lay down two darbha-grass-stalks with their tips to the east, above these a stone, and put the great toe of his right foot upon this stone, with the mantra: "This desirable glory of Savitr." Having put on, with

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> the mantra: "On the impulse of the god Savitr," a garment . . . he takes, *as formerly* [i.e., as at the *Upanayana* previously described in the Sitra] the girdle and so on, three sacred strings [i.e., sacrificial cord], . . . and the hide of a black antelope. . . . He now mutters the verse addressed to Savit. . . . Then, he should enter the order of life in the woods and formulate his intention to live *according to the rules for the Vedic-student.* 149

At both rites the initiates are first shaved in purificatory preparation for the requisite growing of hair and beard. Each receives not only a staff, girdle, and antelope skin, but also, predictably, a new name. In each case the bond with the guru is stronger than that with the previous family. 150

Turning our attention to the "world renouncer," we notice that many of the activities prescribed for this ascetic are identical to those prescribed for the *vanaprasthal*151 (e.g., the practice of *tapas*, 152control of breath,153 *brahmacarya*, 154 begging,155 fasting,156 total abstinence from foods such as fish and flesh,157 recitation of the Veda, etc.). In fact, because of their similarity, the third *asrama-always* somewhat theoretical-began to disappear in actual practice, eclipsed almost totally by the fourth life-stage.158 Quite evidently, then, the *brahmacarin* may also be seen as a forerunner of the *sannyasin.* It is interesting in this context to realize that the term *brahmacarin*, particularly as used in *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, may be translated as "one who occupies himself with, or applies himself to, *brahman* [Brahman]."159 As Gonda observes in commenting on this hymn: "It is sufficiently clear that this 'praise' of the *brahmacarin* views him as a person who 'devotes' himself completely to *brahman* [Brahman] and who endeavors to realize it in his own existence." Despite the progressive changes in the meaning of the term *brahman*, there could be no better definition of the *sannyasin.* The *sannyasin* in his search for, or realization of, Brahman is most certainly a *brahmacarin. Brahma Sutra* 3, 4, 19 characterizes the life of a *sannyasin* as "steadfastness in *brahman* [Brahman],160 and the *Hamsa*161 *Upanisad* explicitly terms the *sannyasin* a *brahmacarin.*162Like the *brahmacarin* of *Atharva Veda* 11, *5*, 7, who is an "embryo in the womb of immortality," or the *brahmacarin* of *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 3, 3, 1, who is delivered from death and becomes immortal, so the *sannyasin* who has realized Brahman (= Atman) attains immortality beyond transmigration and dies no more.

Of particular concern is the issue of how the *sannyasin* was assimilated into the orthodox fold and the role of the *brahmacarin* in that process. The assimilation of the *sannyasin* was substantially more difficult than that of the

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vanaprastha, in that the *sannyasin* constituted a far greater threat to orthodox value and practice. Although the *vanaprastha* progressively turned his attention toward release from transmigration, he was still very much a part of this world of "name and form," part, in fact, of society itself, although living on its boundary. 163 The world renouncer, however, as *initially* conceived, was one who, through experience of the ultimate Atman/Brahman identity, had *already* extricated himself from the human condition, from individuality, and, most significantly, from the confines of obligation (i.e., *dharma*). What was later termed *sannyasa* was at first certainly not a fourth *asrama* complementing the first three but rather a rejection of the entire Brahmanic way of life. The world renouncer was exalted above and beyond the three *asramas* in many principal Upanisads. The practical consequences of having ostensibly extricated himself from the realm of name and form may be seen in the descriptions of the *sannydsin* often presented in the Upanisads:164 He no longer performs external sacrifices. What purpose could they serve? He "throws away" his sacrificial cord; he "throws away" his girdle; he "throws away" his staff; he goes about naked165all indications of the fact that he is beyond classification. Olivelle, in his study of the word *sannyasa*, has in fact shown that the original meaning of the term was "to throw down in a pile" as one would do with unneeded and unwanted objects.166 Relatedly, the term began to imply the "abandonment" of ritual objects and, therewith, ritual action. 167 Eventually, *sannyasa* came to mean abandonment or renunciation of the (sociocultural) world as well as the rite of initiation through which one entered that state of

renunciation.168 With his renunciation of the world, the meditating *sannyasin* attained the highest goal conceived by Brahmanic speculation: experience of Brahman and the resultant release from individuality, social classification, and, in consequence, *social regulation.*

Now, it is precisely here that a fundamental tension emerges within Brahmanism. The practical ramifications of this exultant condition proved unacceptable from the orthodox point of view, which paradoxically insisted that everyone have his proper place and perform his proper actions. If this tension or paradox is kept in view, it is easy to understand why the descriptions of the world renouncer given in the later Upanisads and legal literature are filled with as many contradictions and differences of opinion as they are. Although an oversimplification, it is in many ways accurate to say that those Upanisads *reflecting the spirit of the jñana-kanda* are more faithful to the ideal of liberation and its concrete consequences in their description of the renouncer than is the legal literature of the *karma-kanda,* which is far more interested in bringing the renouncer back under the umbrella of regulation, obligation, and classification. An excellent example of this fundamental con-

flict within Brahmanism is the evident, and logically justifiable, glorification of the fourth as*rama* in the Upanisads, and the almost persistent glorification in the legal literature of the second *asrama,* elevating it over the other three despite perpetual lip service to "release" as the ultimate goal.

The process of assimilating the world renouncer was greatly facilitated by a rather simple but fundamental conceptual change. The fourth *asrama* came to be seen not as a place for those who *have already attained* liberation but rather as a place in which one *seeks* liberation. With this change, the battle for assimilation is virtually won. For the seeker is still, of course, a member of society and therefore subjected to its regulations. Asceticism (i.e., *tapas)* is now prescribed as a means, often the most significant means, of realizing Brahman. Asceticism, *theoretically* unnecessary for the person who had already attained this realization, became progressively more important for the one who seeks this realization.

Whereas the Sannyasa Upanisads regularly declare that the sacrificial cord, and therewith external sacrifice, is to be given up, 169 a more orthodox position states that the sacrificial cord "is the means of acquiring *moksa* [i.e., liberation] for all the twice-born. Those who renounce it by foolishness go to hell."170 *Vrddha-Harita* 8, 57 declares that if a *sannyasin* gives up the sacred cord, he becomes a *candala* (an extremely low caste) while alive and is born a dog after death. It is perhaps not surprising, although certainly interesting, that in many texts the *sannyasin* again performs external sacrifices.171 Many Upanisads also stipulate that the *sannyasin* give up his animal skin and go naked. A more orthodox position, however, often requires the wearing of a black antelope skin, which is the very symbol of Brahmanic sacrifice. The same conflict may be seen in the issue of whether or not the *sannyasin* should have a girdle and a staff. We suggested in our discussion of the 'Vedic watershed' that *jñana* and *karma* each became the focus of its own trend or tradition. This is well evidenced here. The more orthodox tradition of the *karma-kanda* continued to regard external sacrifice very highly. It is the spirit of the *jñana-kanda* that devalues its significance.

The effort of the orthodox tradition to bring the *sannyasin* under the umbrella of *dharma* and, therewith, regulation is clearly seen in the increasing number of qualifications that the would-be renouncer had to meet in order to enter the last *asrama.* One could not simply "abandon" society; one had to do it in the proper way.172 Paradoxically then, the sociocultural norms of Brahmanism were applied to the very act that ostensibly aimed at leaving those norms behind.173 Furthermore, the orthodox need to classify the originally and theoretically "unclassifiable" renouncer becomes evident in the rather detailed descriptions of the numerous *types* of *sannyasins.* 174These

will not be detailed here. Suffice it to say that what began, particularly in the early Upanipads, 175 as a simple description of ascetics who had renounced the world became in time a complicated system of rules and regulations covering virtually every aspect of life. Olivelle clearly states the case: "Renunciation is no longer external or peripheral to *dharma;* it has become one of its most important areas."176 The increasingly prevalent term *moksadharma* beautifully represents the synthesizing boldness of Brahmanic orthodoxy. The *sannyasin,* in addition to his now obligatory asceticism, must also perform an almost endless number of ritual activities.177 Had the orthodox tradition *permitted* the

sannyasin his asceticism, its victory would have been minimal; by making that asceticism *obligatory*, it won a victory of far greater proportion. This is dramatically accentuated by the fact that the orthodox tradition often regarded the asceticism of the third and fourth a*sramas* as a means of penance and purification. From the perspective of *this* tradition at least, the objective of asceticism and renunciation remained to a certain degree atonement for previous transgressions and, therewith, preparation for death.178

Because he was an integral member of the orthodox fold, the *brahmacarin* could serve as a legitimizing model for the asceticism of the fourth as*rama* in many ways. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than at the initiation of the ascetic into the fourth life-stage. This initiation is again quite evidently modeled on that of the *brahmacarinan* ascetic, to be sure, but one who is very much a part of society and its classifications. Whereas the Sannyasa Upanisads often state that the *sannyasin* gives up his sacrificial cord,179 girdle, antelope skin, and upper garment, the *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra* makes it explicitly clear that the *sannyasin receives* these things anew at his initiation in *exactly* the way prescribed at the *Upanayana.* 180 The instructions given for the reception of the initiate by his new teacher (!), including the recitation of the *Savitri* (*Savitripravesana*), are virtually identical in each case.181 As part of the initiation the *sannyasin* has his hair, beard, and nails cut,182 receives a new name,183 swears obedience to his teacher,184 and takes a vow of truthfulness and "noninjury" (*ahimsa*),185 just as the *brahmacarin* had done before him;186 and like the *brahmacarin,* the ascetic now begins "a long period of training."187 It is in many ways accurate to say that the more the *sannyasin* resembles the *brahmacarin* the more he has been assimilated into the orthodox fold.188

The process of assimilation was, no doubt, greatly facilitated by the concept of the *naisthika-brahmacarin,* or perpetual student, which could conveniently serve as a legitimizing model for the later *sannyasin.* As Kane observes, "the idea of perpetual studenthood is very ancient."189 It is clearly in evidence at *Chandogya Upanisad* 2, 23, 1, where the *brahmacarin* stays in

the home of his teacher until death. 190 The *naisthika-brahmacarin* is one who abandons all worldly affairs; he is, in point of fact, a *sannyasin.*191 Following is a brief description of the *naisthika-brahmacarin* given in the *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra* (8, 3). With the exception of the stipulation that he remain until death with his teacher, the description is perfectly applicable to the assimilated *sannyasin:* "The *naisthika [brahmacdrin],* having put on a reddish garment dyed with red chalk and an antelope hide or a garment of bark . . . provided with a girdle, staff, sacrificial cord, and antelope hide, keeping the vow of chastity and himself unsullied, abstaining from pungent substances and salt, dwells in the house of his teacher until his soul is separated (from his body), subsisting on the alms which he has (gathered and) delivered over (to his teacher who, thereupon, allows him a quantity)."192

Although the ascetic forms practiced by the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin* are similar to those practiced by the "old" *brahmacarin,* the intentionality of these ascetic activities is, in certain critical ways, clearly different. Most evidently, the *brahmacarin,* with the possible exception of the perpetual student, is not concerned with release from transmigration-as are the *vanaprastha* and most certainly the *sannyasin.* The *brahmacarin* prepares himself to enter society, not to leave or renounce it. Relatedly, although *Atharva Veda 11,* 5, for example, makes it clear that the brahmacarin "devotes himself to *brahman"* or "seeks to realize *brahman,"* neither the concept of *brahman* nor the consequences of realizing it as there expressed are the same as in the career of the later ascetics. For the *sannyasin,* in particular, knowledge of Brahman assumes a new soteriological significance. Through knowledge of Brahman, one is liberated from *samsara.*193Significantly, however, it is precisely the *tapas,* or the ascetic practice, of the later ascetic that enables him to realize Brahman (= Atman) and thereby attain liberation.194 As demonstrated in chapter 4, *tapas* and revelatory knowledge were already clearly linked in the career of the *brahmacarin.* This is evident, for example, in the performance of ascetic *vratas* preceding instruction in each new aspect of Vedic wisdom. This relation between *tapas* and knowledge reaches full development in the career of the *sannyasin. Tapas* yields knowledge of Brahman, which liberates from *samsara.* As *Maitri Upanisad* 4, 3, for example, declares: "If one does not practice *tapas,* there is no success in [attaining] the knowledge of Atman [= Brahman]" and therewith freedom from rebirth. Although the intentionality of *tapas* changes, the forms of *tapas* very frequently remain the same.195

Most of the practices of the *vanaprastha* and world renouncer mentioned above are clearly set forth in *Manu,* which characterizes both as*ramas* by

severe austerities. Significantly, however, for *Manu* the *brahmacarin's* activities are hardly characterized by austerity at all, certainly not to the degree set forth in the *Atharva Veda* and the Grhya Sutras for the "old" *brahmacarin.* It is not the *brahmacarin* of *Manu* who inherits the characteristics and activities of the old *brahmacarin,* but rather *Manu's vanaprastha* and world renouncer. The *brahmacarin* of *Manu* has become something rather different. Thus, *Manu* states that for the *brahmacarin* obedience to father, mother, and teacher is the best form of austerity. 196 The student who pleases these three obtains all the rewards that the performance of *tapas* can yield. 197 In fact: "All the duties [of the *brahmacarin*]have been fulfilled by him who honors parents and teacher."198 For the *brahmacarin* of the *Atharva Veda* and the Grhya Sutras, study of the Veda was always related to the practice of austerity, but for *Manu* austerity may be almost eliminated for "the study of the Veda is . . . the highest austerity."199 The student must still remain chaste and beg alms, but fasting is no longer necessary, for, as *Manu* observes: "The subsistence of a student on begged food is declared to be equal to fasting."200 *Manu's brahmacarin* is concerned not with fasting but rather with avoiding "excessive eating," which is "prejudicial to health."201 In general, *Manu's brahmacarin* is concerned primarily with obedience to and respect for elders, social graces, purity of heart, doing his duty, and with a disciplined life in a more conventional sense, but not with the creation of an ascetically powerful *tapas.* It is relatedly significant that *Manu* no longer requires the *brahmacarin* to leave his hair, beard, and nails uncut. The old *brahmacarin,* essentially concerned with *tapas,* largely passes from the scene; the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasinand* eventually the *sannydsin* alonebecome his true successors.202

We have in many ways come full circle over the last two chapters. The principal Upanisads, as demonstrated, sought to differentiate the meditative *tapas* of the forest-dweller from the sacrificial *tapas* of the *yajamana.* But in so doing they also differentiated between what they perceived to be a lower and a higher *tapas,* between a *tapas* associated with *karma* and a *tapas* associated *with jñana,* between a *tapas* associated with exertion (√*śram*)and a *tapas* equivalent to contemplative "brooding" (*abhi-*√*tap*)and meditative power. As suggested, the innovative *jñana-kanda* drew these distinctions to help differentiate *its* path to salvation from that described in the "ritual literature."

The challenge presented by the *jñana-kanda* was met by the orthodox tradition. It expanded itself to incorporate the innovations. In so doing, it was, of course, changed. But so too was the *jñana-kanda* tradition changed by the

resulting synthesis. The consequences of that synthesis are beautifully demonstrated in a consideration of *tapas.* For the "assimilated ascetic," for the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin* of Brahmanic India, the two forms of *tapas conceptually differentiated* by the early Upanisads are "again" united in practice. Simply stated: The *tapas* that was associated with *karma* by the *jñana-kanda* is placed *in the service of* that *tapas* associated with *jñana. Tapas* associated with exertion (√*śram*)and self-denial is placed in the service of meditative "brooding" and contemplative power (*abhi-*√*tap*). Traditional ascetic forms, such as fasting, *brahmacarya,* isolation, and *pranayama* are seen as a *means of facilitating* meditation and the higher, contemplative *tapas.* This synthesis of exertion and knowing was already prefigured mythically and "on high" by the *rsis.* "Here below" it was made possible largely through the *brahmacarin.* 203

Again I believe it is clear that the "careers" of the *brahmacarin,* the *vanaprastha,* and the *sannyasin* mayeach in its own particular waybe termed a *tapta-marga.* It is in each case *tapas* that facilitates the desired transition of the *dvi-ja,* or twice-born. Recalling again that the sacrificial "career" of the *yajamana* is also a *tapta-marga,* we may understand not only each as*rama,* but the entire four-stage system itself, as a *tapta-marga:* a path paved with, and made possible by, *tapas. Tapas* clearly emerges here as one of the most powerful instruments for establishing continuity in Vedic and Brahmanic India. Viewed from the perspective of *either* the "orthogenetic" model or the "challenge and assimilation" model, the role of *tapas* is indisputable.

Eight

The "Dramatic" Element in Vedic Initiation

In our introduction we delineated two fundamental forms of initiation symbolism. There is, first, that complex of imagery which must be termed gynecological and obstetrical. The most conspicuous symbols here are the womb, the embryo, and birth. The second primary form of initiation symbolism employs the image of a passage, often of prolonged duration, leading the initiate from a less desirable to a more desirable state. *Each* of these two forms may be termed *either* "easy" or "dramatic." If, for example, the imagery of spiritual rebirth from an embryonic condition emphasizes a preliminary and necessary initiatory death, then the form may be termed dramatic. Relatedly, if the passage imagery is clearly difficult, clearly dangerous, or both, then again, such passage imagery may be termed dramatic.

Womb, embryo, and gestation symbolism is extremely conspicuous in Vedic literature. We have on more than one occasion considered this issue in some detail, 1 never, however, emphasizing its "dramatic" dimension. Vedic scholarship has, in fact, been clearly one-sided in its continual references to such womb and gestation symbolism of the "easy" variety. The dramatic dimension of both embryo/womb and passage symbolism has hardly received the attention it requires if a comprehensive view of Vedic initiation symbolism is to emerge. Even Eliade, who himself notes that "initiatory death is indispensable" for spiritual rebirth,2 has characterized *all* Brahmanic initiations as "easy."3

James S. Helfer, in an article entitled "The Initiatory Structure of the *Kathopanisad,"*4has challenged Eliade's assertion that all Brahmanic initia-

tions are easy rather than dramatic. He concludes that in at least one case, namely the *Katha Upanisad*, a dramatic initiation appears in the Brahmanic corpus. Although Helfer's area of concern is quite limited, his observations are well substantiated and well taken. The dramatic element is, however, conspicuous in many more than the one illustration offered by Helfer. In fact, a consideration of Vedic literature offers us, I suggest, a veritable deluge of dramatic imagery.

Symbols of Death, Danger, and Difficult Passage in Early Vedic Initiation

Symbols of Death

Oldenberg and Hauer argued that at both the *Upanayana* and the *Diksa* symbols of rebirth are preceded by a symbolic representation of death. 5 Lommel, however, consistently maintains that rebirth at these rituals is not preceded by symbols of death.6 The intricacies of this "debate" between Hauer, Oldenberg, and Lommel need not be detailed, except to say that the major argument revolves around the issue of whether the embryo is a symbol of new life, "the essence of life" (as it is for Lommel), or a symbol of death or a deathlike condition which precedes new life (as it is for Oldenberg and Hauer). It appears, however, that the crucial issue has been overlooked. The issue is not whether the embryo represents "the essence of life" *or* death but rather that it represents *both* simultaneously.7 It is precisely this bivalent imagery which strikes us when considering the symbol of the womb. Eliade, in a general statement regarding initiation, has observed that embryo and generative imagery is "inextricably connected" to "images and symbols of *ritual death."* The hut or womb-homologue, for example, suggests for Eliade both "initiatory death" and emergent life.8 The simultaneity of opposites often lies at the heart of Vedic symbolism. Any discussion of death imagery and its relation to rebirth imagery must, I believe, be organized around this realization. It is appropriate in this context to consider the paradigmatic Prajapati. *Satapatha Brahmana* 8, 4, 2, 1 declares that Prajapati "became pregnant with all beings." It continues to observe, however, that while these beings "were in the womb, Death seized them." Even more strikingly, at *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 6, 5, 4, Prajapati desires to be reproduced. It is here the personified Death who carries Prajapati as an embryo for a year and then gives birth (= rebirth) to the god.

Womb and gestation symbolism is prevalent at the *Upanayana*.9 To restate briefly: *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 3 observes, "When the teacher receives

[upa-ni] the *brahmacarin* as a disciple, he places him as a foetus inside (of his body). He carries him for *three nights* in his belly." 10 *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 5, 4, 12 indicates that "by laying his right hand on (the pupil), the teacher becomes

pregnant (with him)." The same text also observes that "he who enters on a term of studentship becomes an embryo."11 As Lommel and other scholars have suggested, the three nights are a homologue of the gestation year which the embryo undergoes prior to its rebirth.12 One who has experienced the *Upanayana* is a *dvi-ja*, or twice-born.

It is appropriate to consider in this context certain observations made by Helfer in his discussion of the *Katha Upanisad.* This text describes the descent of Naciketas into the realm of Death (i.e., the god Yama). After asking his father three times, "To whom will you give me?" Naciketas is told, "I give you to Death." As Helfer demonstrates, Naciketas is prepared "to be sacrificed." He descends to the realm of Yama where he spends three nights in the house of Death. During that period he is in total darkness and eats no food. This is interpreted as an "initiatory ordeal," a "ritual death" which precedes transformation and rebirth. The house of Death is hence also a womb,13 and Death himself the master of initiation. After the ordeal of three nights, Naciketas is "released from the mouth of Death."14

As demonstrated by Hauer, there are clear parallels between the *Upanayana* and the Naciketas episode.15 Just as Naciketas spends three nights in the realm of Death, so the student spends three nights in the womb of the teacher, as *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 14 makes clear. Further, this same hymn also explicitly states that the teacher is Death. Just as the house of Yama (i.e., Death) is simultaneously a womb, so at the *Upanayana* the womb and the embryonic condition are simultaneously related to death. The three nights are a homologue of the year which is the "full term of pregnancy" or gestation,16 yet the year is also Death.17 *Atharva Veda* 6, 133, 3, a mantra explicitly prescribed for use at the *Upanayana*, declares that the *brahmacarin* is the student of Death. *Atharva Veda* 8, 1, also a mantra prescribed by the *Kausika Sutra* for use at the *Upanayana,* states, "Step up here . . . loosening the fetter of death" (v. 4) and "Make now (this one), O gods, pass up out of death" (v. 18).18 *Atharva Veda* 8, *53* (55), also explicitly prescribed for use at the *Upanayana*, tells us that the *brahmacarin* must be "released from Yama's other world" (v. 1). Entrance into Yama's realm is beset by danger, thus emphasizing the dramatic character of such an entry. *Atharva Veda* 8, 1, 9 speaks of the "dark dogs of Yama," the "road-defenders" which are sent forth to seize the initiate. The road through Yama's realm is described as "frightful" (v. 8, 1, 10), "beset by the flesh-burning fire," beset by the "jaw-snapping grinder" (*jambha*)from which the initiate must be "defended" by the gods (vv. 8, 1, 11-16).

At the *Diksa,* too, womb and gestation symbolism are conspicuous. The *diksita* is placed in a hut in which he spends much of this time. *Aitareya Brahmana* explains, "The hut of the *diksita* is the womb of the *diksita;* verily thus they [i.e., the priests] conduct him to his own womb." 19 The text also states: "Him whom they cause to undertake the *Diksa*, the sacrificial priests make into an embryo again."20 The *diksita* is covered with a garment. "The garment is the caul (*ulba*)of the *diksita* .. ."21

Despite Lommel's arguments to the contrary, death symbolism at the *Diksa* cannot be dismissed. *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana,* for example, reads: "Thrice a man dieth, (first) when his father emitted him as seed thus into the womb. Then he dies for the first time. Blind darkness, as it were, is the womb . . . and when they consecrate him [at the *Diksa*]then he dies for the second time . . . He does not offer oblations. He does not sacrifice. He does not approach a woman. He speaks non-human speech. Verily he then has *the form of one dead.'*22

We have repeatedly discussed the ascetic efforts of the *diksita* and his continued asceticism as *yajamana.* Asceticism accompanies the entire sacrificial scenario. We have also articulated the embryonic and generative implications of these ascetic forms. Fasting, for example, symbolizes the "fast" of the foetus in the womb,23 as does sustaining oneself on the "fast-milk." The symbolism is, however, bivalent. *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 6, 5, 1, for example, states: "Hunger is death." Fasting may clearly be seen as a ritual ordeal and symbol of death. *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 10, 14, 9, 10 observes that the *diksita* must become lean; there must be no food left in him; nothing must separate the skin and his bones. These statements appear related to *Satapatha Brahmana* 11,1, 8, 4: "When he [i.e., the sacrificer] enters on a fast, he thereby gives himself up to the gods . . . for he becomes an oblation to the gods." As Hubert and Mauss have observed in this context: "He consumes only milk, the food of fasting. . . . Then, having as it were sacrificed his former body . . he is fit to be sacrificed."24 In point of fact, *all* the ascetic practices of the *brahmacarin* and *diksita-yajamana* may be interpreted as ritual ordeal and, therefore, as symbolic death. In fact, Eliade himself in various generalizations has interpreted fasting; prohibitions regarding speech and sleep; seclusion-isolation; chastity; and indeed all ascetic forms as symbols of death.25

The most graphic and explicit death symbolism attending the sacrificial scenario is found in conjunction with the animal

sacrifice and the pressing of the Soma. And it is precisely here as well that rebirth symbolism is most conspicuous. It is, therefore, at the sacrifice itself that the simultaneity of opposites is most clearly revealed. At the mythological and paradigmatic level

creation, birth, and successive rebirth are seen as a sacrifice. This idea is clearly present already in *Rg Veda* 10, 90, in which the Primal Person (Purusa), later identified as Prajapati, 26 is sacrificedput to death and dismembered-by the gods, a death that *is* the creation of the world. The Brahmanas continually demonstrate that birth issues from the sacrifice. Significantly, the spiritual rebirth of the sacrificer himself occurs at and through the sacrifice, that is, the clear and dramatic death of a sacrificial victim.27 But even more significantly, the homologies of the Brahmanas make clear the identity of Prajapati, the sacrifice, *the sacrificial victim, and the sacrificer himself.* As the Brahmanas declare, man is truly born, that is, spiritually reborn, through the sacrifice.28 The death of the victimwhich is simultaneously the death of Prajapati-constitutes the spiritual rebirth of the sacrificer in the heavenly world. The sacrificer is, however, identified with that very victim which dies.29 The sacrificer is thus not simply subject to conditions of "death" and "rebirth" *successively*, as Heesterman so often opines,30 but rather *simultaneously*. This is true also paradigmatically in the case of Prajapati, for the slaying of the victim in sacrifice represents not only the primal slaying of Prajapati but constitutes also and simultaneously his restoration and rebirth.31 Quoting Hubert and Mauss: "The victim represents death as well as life."32In what appears to be an evident allusion to *Rg Veda* 10, 90, *Satapatha Brahmana* states, "At first, namely, the gods offered up man as the victim."33 Relatedly, *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 6, 1, 20 states, "The sacrificer is Prajapati [i.e., Purusa] at his own sacrifice." All sacrificial "victims" at the ritual, animal or otherwise, are symbolic substitutions for-or symbolic equivalents of-man. As Biardeau has shown, the sacrificing *grhastha*, the "master of the house," is himself identified not only with Prajapati but also with Purusa, the Primal Man sacrificed at creation.34 Eggeling relatedly states that "the initiation (i.e., *Diksa*)of the sacrificer constitutes his consecration as the victim at the animal sacrifice" and "the sacrifice represents the sacrificer himself, and thus he makes sure of his offering up his entire self, and obtaining a new divine Self."35

The imagery of *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 6, 3, 19-20 is undeniably "dramatic:" "Agni and Soma have seized him who consecrates himself [i.e., the *diksita-embryo*]between their jaws; . . . and he himself that consecrates himself is the food of the gods; thus they have seized him between their jaws. . . . He then walks out [of the hut = womb] with, 'Hail! I am freed.'" Following this emergence from the womb-hut, an animal sacrifice is performed at which the sacrificer, having already emerged from the deathlike constriction of the womb, again dies and is simultaneously reborn with the slaying of the victim with which he is homologized. The same simultaneity of death and rebirth is

also present at the Soma pressing. The pressing of the Soma is the slaying of Soma, that is, his death. This act also constitutes spiritual rebirth for the sacrificer. But again Soma, Prajapati, the sacrifice, and the sacrificer are equated. 36 As *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 6, 9, 2 clearly states: "They kill the Soma in that they press it; in the slaying of the Soma the sacrifice is slain, *with the sacrifice the sacrificer."*37 The simultaneity of death and rebirth is expressed beautifully in an explanation regarding Soma himself, "As to why he [i.e., Soma] is called Yajña (sacrifice): Now when they press him, they slay him; and when they spread him [i.e., perform the Soma Sacrifice], they cause him to be born. "38 The slaying of Soma is his birth, just as the death of the animal is its birth in the heavenly world and therewith the spiritual rebirth of the sacrificer.

Danger and Difficult Passage

In addition to symbols of death, "dramatic" imagery may employ symbols of danger or difficult passage to indicate that the initiation is not "easy." Because the essential mechanism of spiritual rebirth in the Veda is the sacrifice, this ritual complex, along with its mythological models, again demands primary attention. The hut constructed for the *diksita* constitutes not only a womb but also a place of separation from man. "He who is consecrated, truly draws nigh to the gods. . . . Now the gods are secreted [i.e., separated] from men, and secret also is what is enclosed on every side."39 As *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 1, 1, 1 observes in this context, "The sacrificer *approaches* the world of the gods . . . . *'It is not easy,'* they say, *'to go from this world; for who knows if he is in yonder world or not.'* "40As a text explains, "The man

who is consecrated has fallen from this world *and yet not* gone to the world of the gods."41 Such a passage from the world of man to that of the gods is hence fraught with danger. It is precisely for this reason that the passage is termed the *durohana*, the "difficult ascent." The road to travel is long, as Lévi observes, "so long that one arrives at the end with difficulty."42 "The route is not without its hazards."43 *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 9, 3, 2, in describing the passage upward, states: "On both sides two flames are ever burning; they scorch him who deserves to be scorched, and allow him to pass who deserves to pass." It should be stressed that these words are found not in the context of the funeral rites but rather in the context of the sacrifice performed by the sacrificer seeking spiritual rebirth. *Satapatha Brahmana* 12, 2, 3, 12 speaks of the "wilds and abysses of the sacrifice" and warns that "if any venture into them not knowing the ropes, then hunger and thirst, evil doers and fiends harass them, even as fiends would harass foolish men wandering in a wild forest."44 *Taittiriya Samhita* 1, 2, 2, 2 states in a prayer to

Varuna: "May we mount that . . . ship whereby we pass over all difficulties [*durita*]." Gonda explains that "the *chances of failure* are characterized as *durita"* and translates the word as "bad courses, danger, discomfort, evil, difficulties. " 45

The *adhvaryu* provides the sacrificer with a staff at the *Diksa*. This is retained by the sacrificer throughout the entire scenario. The staff is given to the sacrificer for the single and specific purpose of "driving away the evil spirits, the staff being a thunderbolt."46 That the sacrificial scenario is a difficult passage beset by danger is made clear in a mantra recited when the staff is received: "Stand up, O tree, erect; guard me from injury on to the goal of this sacrifice."47 A clear danger is always present from the *raksasas* (evil demons) who roam the air,48 pursuing the sacrifice and the sacrificer, seeking to destroy the sacrifice and imperil the sacrificer's rebirth.49 The *raksasas*, for example, would hurt the *diksita* if he were to leave the hut prematurely.50 Danger at the *Diksa* is evidenced also at the shaving ritual. There is danger that the knife may injure the sacrificer. Therefore, *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 1, 2, 7 states: "He lays a stalk of sacrificial grass on (the hair of the whisker), with the text, 'O plant, protect me!' . . . He applies the razor with the text, 'O knife, injure him not!' " In a related fashion, the *diksita* is permitted to scratch himself only with the black deer's horn provided him. The text instructs, "Let not the consecrated henceforth scratch himself either with a chip of wood or with his nail. For he who is consecrated becomes an embryo; and were any one to scratch an embryo either with a chip of wood or his nail . . . *it would die. "*51

The words *it* [i.e., the *diksita*] *would die* in the preceding passage are significant. Throughout the sacrificial scenario this possibility of death is always present, and the greatest as well as the most intricate of precautions must be taken to avoid such a death. This type of death must be clearly differentiated from the symbolic one discussed above. Symbolic death is integral to the proper and successful performance of the rite. There exists, however, always the great danger of an *improper* death such as that just mentioned, which is injurious to the entire sacrificial procedure, the sacrificer himself, and his hoped-for spiritual rebirth. It is a death to be avoided, yet its constant possibility introduces clear difficulty and danger into the ritual undertaking. In fact, the intricacies of the ritual constitute the greatest source of danger for the sacrificer. No detail may be overlooked, no act incorrectly performed, or just such an improper "death" will result. Precisely because these ritual intricacies characterize the entire sacrificial scenario, there can be little question that it constitutes a difficult passage in every sense. As Hubert and Mauss have said regarding the sacrificial procedure, "From the moment

that it has begun, it must continue to the end *without interruption* and in ritual order. All the operations of which it is composed must follow each other in turn without a break. The forces at work, if they are not directed in exactly the way prescribed, elude the sacrificer and priest and turn upon them in a terrible fashion." 52 Citing Lévi, Hubert and Mauss also state: "Any ritual error is a *cut* made in the cloth of sacrifice. By this act the magic forces escape and cause the sacrificer *to die, or go mad, or be ruined.* "53 Even the slightest of errors in the procedure may prove fatal. As Lévi has correctly indicated, "In this maze of meticulous prescriptions, error is all too easy and its consequences are terrible. The dangers which await the sacrificer are everywhere."54 Brian Smith, citing *Baudhayana Srauta Sutra* 28, 10, states: "There were simply too many things that could go wrong. The sacrifice was always inclined to fall apart (*skanna*), be cut (*chinna*),break (*bhinna*),or shatter (*bhagna*)or to become defiled (*dusta*), inverted (*viparita*), or defective (*hina*).55

Examples of such sacrificial intricacies and the attendant dangers could be multiplied almost without end. *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 1, 3, 3 relates: "If he were to uncover (the sacrificer) before purchasing the Soma, the foetus would be liable to miscarriage." Also, "One should not look at the fire-pan when it is empty; one must say to himself: 'I do not wish to look at it while it is empty.' If one should look at it while it was empty, it would devour him."56 Lévi observes: "The slope of the ritual terrain is no less menacing than the utensils." The text explains that the terrain of the sacrificial ground should rise toward the south. Were this not the case, the sacrificer would quickly go to the world beyond" (i.e., die incorrectly).57 Lévi notes that death follows as a consequence of priestly error.58 For example, "If the sacrificial stake is made in a certain way, the sacrificer goes away to the other world before his time" (i.e, dies incorrectly).59 *Taittiriya Samhita* 3, 1, 3, 2 warns: "If they take (the fire) for cooking the victim from the *Ahavaniya,* they tear the sacrifice asunder." The same text at 3, 2, 6, 1 states that if the speckled butter used at the sacrifice "were to be spilt, the sacrificer would be likely to die." Consider also, "If the man who is consecrated were to leave the consecration shed [i.e., hut], it would be as when a foetus falls from the womb. . . . The fire here is a tiger to guard the house. Therefore if the man who is consecrated were to leave (the shed), he [i.e, the fire = tiger] would be likely to spring up and slay him."60

The sacrificer's relation to the animal victim is also a precarious one. In one sense he must share the fate of the victim in order to "die" in the correct manner and be reborn. He must, however, not share it completely, or it would imply an "incorrect" and fatal death. The intricacies of the ritual, therefore,

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provide for a simultaneous union with and distinction from the victim. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 8, 1, 10 states: "The *Pratiprasthatri* [priest] holds on to it [i.e., the victim] from behind by means of two spits, and the *Adhvaryu* [priest] (holds on to) the *Pratiprasthatri*, and the sacrificer to the *Adhvaryu.* As to this they say, 'That (victim) must not be held on to by the sacrificer, for they lead it unto death; therefore let him not hold on to it.' But let him nevertheless hold on to it; for that (victim) which they lead to the sacrifice they lead not to death; therefore let him hold on to it." *Taittiriya Samhita* 3, 1, 5, 1 states, "Now the victim is lead to death, and if he should lay hold on it, the sacrificer would be likely to die" (i.e., incorrectly). Hubert and Mauss observe that the sacrificer "needs to touch the animal in order to remain united with it, and yet is *afraid* to do so, for in so doing he runs the risk of sharing its fate." 61

Having ascended to the heavenly world along the dangerous passage (*durohana*)provided by the sacrifice, one might suspect that the perilous journey of the *yajamana* is triumphantly over. This, however, is hardly the case. As Brian Smith rightly reminds us, the sacrificer's journey must be a "two-way trip."62 Mortal and corporeal man cannot long remain in the heavenly realm. Were he to do so he would in fact die. Having reserved his place in heaven, he must now *descend* to the firm foundation of earth, assured of his posthumous abode. Were he not to do so, were he tempted to remain, Death, according to a primordial contract, would be allowed to quickly "claim its share" *(Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 4, 3, 9). If, as the Brahmanas declare, one is truly born (i.e, spiritually reborn) only when born from the sacrifice, then that rebirth is a precarious and dramatic undertaking indeed.

The Doctrine of Transmigration and Its Impact on Initiation Symbolism

From Womb Symbolism to Passage Symbolism

Vedic literature demonstrates, I believe, a clear shift in emphasis from womb symbolism to passage symbolism. Passage symbolism becomes progressively more conspicuous in the Upanisads and subsequent literature while embryo/womb imagery conspicuously decreases-even disappears-as a symbol indicating *spiritual* rebirth. There is further, and relatedly, a transition from womb imagery to what may be termed "anti-womb" imagery. This double transition and its cause deserve careful attention.

Although embryo and womb imagery was conspicuous in the pre-Upanisadic texts, such symbolism was frequently coordinated with passage symbolism; the two, one might say, reinforced each other. A few examples will

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suffice. The hut of the *diksita* constitutes his womb, for the *diksita* is an embryo. 63 It also facilitates his passage from the

realm of man to that of the gods. The hut is built upon a piece of ground "above which no other part of ground rises; for it was from thence that the gods *ascended* to heaven, and he who is consecrated indeed ascends to the gods."64 Ascent to heaven is, of course, a conspicuous form of passage symbolism as well as a symbol of rebirth.65 In the womb homologue the *diksita* passes from the unreal (*a-sat*)to the real (*sat*), from darkness to light, from death to immortality,66 from untruth to truth,67 from the impure (*a-medya*)to the pure (*medya*).68 As *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 1, 4, 1 observes: "All formulas of the *Diksa* are *audgrabhana* (elevatory), since he who is consecrated [i.e., the *diksita-em*bryo] elevates himself (*ud-grabh*)from this world to the world of the gods."

Those texts that follow the Brahmanas demonstrate a conspicuous decrease in-even absence of-womb and gestation imagery as a symbol related to *spiritual* rebirth. In fact, womb and gestation symbolism disappear in certain contexts where they would otherwise be expected. This is clearly evident at both the *Upanayana* and the *Diksa.*

The *Upanayana* remains integral to the Brahmanic tradition. In fact, there is a striking continuity in the specific actions and symbols employed at the rite. It is precisely this striking similarity and continuity over time which makes the decrease-indeed absence-of womb and gestation symbolism even more conspicuous. The Grhya Sutras are heavily dependent upon the *Atharva Veda* and the Brahmanas in their description of the *Upanayana.* For example, the teaching of the *Savitri* to the student,69 the giving of the staff, the girdle, and the garment to the student,70 the placing of fuel by the student upon the fire of the teacher,71 the ascetic practices,72 etc., are all present. Further, many traditional mantras from the Samhitas are still employed in the later texts.73 The *brahmacarin,* however, is no longer described as an embryo nor is the anticipated womb imagery present.74 In the Dharma Sutras and Dharma Sastras, most importantly those of *Manu* and *Vinu,* the same observation applies. The gestation and obstetrical imagery of embryo and womb has disappeared. The *brahmacarin* is still regarded as a *twice-born,*75 as he always had been. One receives the distinct impression, however, that this term now stands without any supporting imagery; it has in fact become only a sociological category without any reinforcing symbolism.76

The Vedic *Upanayana,* as demonstrated, constitutes the model for many later Indian initiation rituals, particularly for ascetics such as the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin.* The continuity and similarities are striking, and therefore even more striking again is the absence of womb imagery in these contexts. Upon initiation into the fourth as*rama,* the *sannyasin* states, "I enter the *Savitri."*

He then recites the *Savitri* hymn as did the student. 77 He also places fuel on the teacher's fire. Further, the teacher should bow to the entering *sannyasin* and hand him a loincloth, an upper garment, and a staff. But despite these and other similarities described in the previous chapter, there is again no womb or embryo symbolism. The Upanisads often refer to advanced students of sacred knowledge being initiated by a teacher, either mythical or real.78 Again, despite numerous parallels with the traditional *Upanayana* imagery, no womb symbolism appears.

The initiation of the later ascetics is often referred to as a *Diksa.*79 And given the great parallel which existed between the classic *Upanayana* and the classic Soma *Diksa,* it is not unusual that these later *Diksas* resemble in a very striking fashion not only the *Upanayana* but also the Soma *Diksa* itself. Yet again in such later *Diksas,* despite the similarities to the earlier rite, womb symbolism is almost nonexistent.80 Rather than citing countless examples where such symbolism does not exist, we can perhaps best substantiate our point by noting that Gonda has done an extensive study on *Diksa* and related initiation rites in which his explicit objective was to demonstrate similarity and continuity over a great period of time, particularly between the Vedic and the "Hindu" periods. There can be little question that had explicit womb and embryo symbolism been present in the texts following the Brahmanas, Gonda, given his meticulous precedure, would have found and cited such imagery in order to substantiate his own thesis. Even in his lengthy discussion, however, such explicit imagery virtually never appears subsequent to the Brahmanas. Gonda, in discussing the Soma *Diksa* of the Brahmanas, notes quite correctly that the embryological character of the rite is emphasized with "plentiful imagery."81 What he fails to indicate is that in all subsequent *Diksas,* in whatever context, although rebirth or a new birth may be alluded to or suggested, this "plentiful imagery" has all but disappeared. *New birth* continues to exist as a formal term, as does the term *twice-born* (*dvi-ja*)in the case of the *brahmacarin,* but it is unsupported by any striking symbolism.82 I do not suggest that in all later Hinduism absolutely no womb or embryo imagery exists as a symbol related to or indicating spiritual rebirth.83 I do wish to assert, however, that in the centuries immediately following the Brahmanas, Vedic literature experiences a striking decrease in such symbolism and that in certain contexts where we would anticipate such imagery it has virtually disappeared.

The cause underlying this evident decrease in womb symbolism as an image indicating or correlated with spiritual rebirthcorrelated, in other words, with a positive, even a soteriological transformation in manis directly related to the emerging notion of literal, biological rebirth on earth and

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the distinctly negative connotations of such a rebirth. Womb symbolism had been inextricably bound up with rebirth. When "rebirth," or the prospect of being born again, takes to itself a literal, biological, and relatedly negative connotation, womb symbolism is simultaneously devalued. It can no longer carry the positive, even soteriological, connotations that it could carry when rebirth implied primarily a spiritual and therefore a positive event.

The growing soteriological ideal of the Upanisads and subsequent literature is *not* to be *reborn* but rather to realize that one is *unborn.* The goal is to realize that the true Self, the Atman, exists eternally and unchangingly, liberated from the round of birth and rebirth. *Katha Upanisad* 2, 18 states, "The wise one (i.e., the soul, the Atman, the Self) is not born [*na jayate*], nor dies. This one has not come from anywhere, has not become anyone. *Unborn* [*a* $\sqrt{jan}$], constant, eternal, primeval, this one is not slain when the body is slain. 84 The *Katha Upanisad* contrasts the evil of *samsara* with attaining the true goal from which one is "born no more" [*na jayate*].85 At *Katha Upanisad* 5, 1 the true Self is again described as "unborn," as is the heavenly Person, the Purusa, or Atman at *Mundaka Upanisad* 2, 1, *2. Svetasvatara Upanisad* 1, 1 declares that by knowing God "there is cessation of birth." *Svetasvatara Upanisad* 3, 21 speaks of the essential Self or Atman which is "exempt from birth," and *Maitri Upanisad* also characterizes the Atman or true Self as "unborn."86

As "unborn" characterizes the eternal, so, as *Svetasvatara Upanisad 5,* 4 makes clear, being *"born from the womb"* characterizes that very finitude which must be overcome.87 *Visnu* 20, 29 observes that "those who are born are sure to die and those who have died are sure to be born again." Womb symbolism had been so associated with rebirth in the pre-Upanisadic texts that when rebirth is applied to the biological arena it is still essentially represented by the phrase "return to the womb." "Entering the womb" and biological birth are inextricably interbound. Examples are multiple. *Yogatattva Upanisad* 5,states; *"He comes again to the womb* for birth" *(yonijanmani sritva)*.88 *Manu* 4, 200 speaks of being "born again in the womb." Occasionally, the principal Upanisads speak of the possibilities of entering an evil or a good womb depending upon one's *karma* and/or knowledge as at *Maitri Upanisad* 3, 2 or at *Chandogya Upanisad 5,* 10, 7, where one may enter either a "pleasant" or a "stinking" womb.89 Yet such womb symbolism ultimately receives an essentially pejorative connotation. Thus, at *Manu* 6, 63, returning to the womb merely constitutes the gateway to "wanderings through ten thousand millions of existences." *Manu* speaks of the pain of "repeatedly lying in various wombs" and of "agonizing births and imprisonment in fetters hard to bear."90 Womb imagery thus continues to exist but

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with a clearly pejorative connotation. Womb imagery in fact has become or been replaced by "antiwomb" imagery.

Examples of such antiwomb imagery are multiple. *Katha Upanisad* 5, 7 uses the imagery of entering a womb as equivalent to embodiment as a corporeal being. 91 Significantly, *Svetasvatara Upanisad* 1, 7 maintains that when one is merged with Brahma(n) one is "liberated from the womb." At *Maitri Upanisad* 3, 1-2, to enter a womb is to be "overcome by the pairs of opposites," a clearly undesirable and unliberated condition. Significantly, in discussing the *Upanayana Manu* does not employ womb symbolism in describing the rite of the *dvi-ja* but does use womb imagery in describing the devalued biological birth: "Let him consider that (he receives) a (mere animal) existence, when his parents begat him through mutual affection, and when he was *born from the womb.* But that birth which a teacher acquainted with the whole Veda, in accordance with the law, procures for him through the *Savitri,* is real, exempt from age and death."92

Visnu in the same context counsels: "Let him consider as a merely human existence that which he owes to his father and mother uniting from carnal desire and to his being *born from his mother's womb.* That existence which his teacher, who knows all the Vedas, effects for him . . . is true existence; that existence is exempt from age and death."93

Significantly, the *Garbha* ("embryo") *Upanisad* concerns itself not at all with spiritual rebirth as one might suspect, but rather with literal, biological birth. It deals with the development of the embryo in the literal womb. As Deussen in his

commentary suggests, the discussion would be more suited to a place in a textbook on medicine than in an Upanisad.94 The womb and embryo are not Upanisadic symbols of a positive rebirth but rather of a negative rebirth in the realm of *samsara. Visnu,* in describing the evils and pains associated with "the transitoriness of the passage through mundane existence," cites as part of this travail "having to dwell in an embryo, covered with everlasting darkness." The text speaks of the "dreadful pain one has to suffer at the time of birth, while the embryo is coming forth from the narrowness of the womb."95 Soteriology in Vedic literature concerns itself more and more with escaping *samsara,* with no longer returning to the womb. This is particularly true for the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin.* It is hence perfectly plausible that womb imagery, traditionally associated with birth, would be avoided in describing their initiation. This is particularly conspicuous in the *Sannyasa Upanisad,* which deals specifically with the initiation of the *sannyasin.* No womb symbolism appears in the description of the *sannyasin's Diksa.* In fact, according to this text, one becomes a *sannyasin* precisely because he *"shudders at the prospect of entering another womb*."96

As stated above, in the pre-Upanisadic texts womb symbolism and passage symbolism constituted a reinforcing imagery indicating a positive transition. In subsequent Brahmanic literature, however, a new type of passage symbolism emerges. Although modeled upon the older passage symbolism, it indicates passage fromand release fromthe womb and *samsara.* Womb symbolism and passage symbolism are no longer reinforcing images. They are, rather, placed in opposition to each other. Examples of such passage symbolism are so plentiful that only a few need be cited. *Mundaka Upanisad* 3, 2, 1 speaks of the knowers of Brahman who *"pass beyond* the seed (or rebirth) here" in distinction to men of desire who are "born (again) here and there." 97 At *Mundaka Upanisad* 2, 2, 6, he who knows the Atman to be his true Self has success in *"crossing to the further shore beyond darkness"*98 (*of the womb*). In the same Upanisad, knowledge of the Atman is described as the "bridge to immortality," the bridge beyond rebirth.99

It is important to realize in the present context that such passage is very frequently difficult. The passage beyond rebirth is a dramatic one. *Katha Upanisad* 3, 14 observes that the road to salvation is a "difficult path," a "sharpened edge of a razor, hard to traverse."100 *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 4, 4, 8 describes "the ancient narrow path that stretches far away. . . . By it the wise, the knowers of Brahma(n), go up hence to the heavenly world, released" (from birth). *Kausitaki Upanisad* 1, 5 speaks of the doorkeepers who guard the throne of Brahma.

A particularly striking example of the difficult passage is evidence by the use of the Sanskrit word *setu,* as for example at *Chandogya Upanisad* 8, 4, 1. *Setu* refers literally to a raised piece of earth which separates fields; it is a boundary, a device that prevents passage. Yet the word simultaneously connotes a causeway or passage. It is both a bridge which facilitates passage and a dam calculated to impede passage. Its character as an impediment is clearly evident in its usage in the *Rg Veda,* where it refers to a bond, a fetter. The world of Brahma, later used as a symbol of *moksa,* is separated from all other worlds, from transmigration, by a *setu.* With this coincidence of meaning, *setu* thus constitutes an excellent symbol for the difficult passage to release from rebirth.

The Interior Passage

As the negative connotations and implications of transmigration increased in the Brahmanic mind, another form of passage symbolism emerges and grows in importance. This symbolism indicates a passage which is not only difficult and dramatic but also *undesirable.* It is that passage from life to life, from womb to womb, with all the attendant judgments, hells, punish-

ments, and sufferings in between. *Manu,* in this context, speaks of traversing "the gloom *difficult to traverse."* The text describes the passage from life to life as "always terrible." 101 The difficult and dramatic character of such a passage is particularly evident in that men who transgress *dharma* (law, morality, proper action) are forced to pass through multiple hells prior to rebirth on earth. Transgression of *dharma* is, however, hardly an unusual occurrence. *Visnu* cites transgressions such as stealing grain, stealing water, stealing salt, drinking spirits, breaking conventional practice, breaking a vow of chastity, etc.102 In short, the violation of *dharma* is an all but universal condition. This must be born in mind when *Visnu* states that those who transgress *dharma* "have to suffer terrible pangs when they have departed life

and enter upon the path of Yama" until through their penance they are born again in an earthly womb.103 During this passage, transgressors of *dharma* are, for example:

> dragged hither and thither (upon even and uneven roads) by the dire ministers of Yama; they are conducted (to hell by them), with menancing gestures. (There) they are devoured by dogs and jackels, by hawks, crows, herons, cranes, and other (carnivorous animals), by (bears and other) animals having fire in their mouth, and by serpents and scorpions. They are scorched by blazing fire, pierced by thorns, divided into parts by saws, and tormented by thirst. They are agitated by hunger and by fearful troops of tigers, and faint away at every step on account of the foul stenches proceeding from pus and from blood. Casting wistful glances upon the food and drink of others, they receive blows from ministers (of Yama), whose faces are similar to those of crows, herons, cranes, and other horrid animals. Here they are boiled in oil, and there pounded with pestels or ground in iron or stone vessels.104

Such examples could easily be multiplied from the legal literature. What appears evident is the dramatic and difficult nature of the passage and the presence of Death. *Visnu* warns that "having undergone such tortures, . . . and having suffered most acute pain, . . . men who transgress the *dharma* must endure further pangs in their migration [or passage] through animal bodies."105 Ultimately, after such passage they are reborn into the womb of a human being. This is also, for many reasons, a difficult experience. For example, while dwelling in the womb one is covered with everlasting darkness. There is also "the dreadful pain which man has to suffer at the time of his birth, while the embryo is coming forth from the narrowness of the womb."106 *Manu* speaks of "the (pain of) repeatedly lying in various wombs" and of "agonizing births and imprisonment in fetters hard to bear." The text declares that one who drinks the spiritous liquor called *sura* "shall

enter (the bodies) of small and large insects, of moths, of birds, feeding on ordure, and of destructive beasts." So also, men who "relinquish without the pressure of necessity their proper occupations will become the servants of Dasyus after migrating into despicable bodies." 107 All such passage is clearly undesirable as a literal event.

One might suggest that we are not dealing here with symbols of initiation because the texts speak of such passage as a literal event after biological death. The issue is in fact one of initiation, however, for, as the texts make clear, one *"must reflect upon"* such passage and its agony in this very life.108One must mentally transport oneself through these hells and through the gloom and suffering of the embryonic condition. One must also reflect upon dreadful incarnations in order to realize the fruits of evil actions. In this sense, the later texts provide the itinerary for a spiritual passage ultimately calculated to free one from that passage as a literal event. The texts therefore provide an initiation through mediation and reflection. *Manu* states that one must "reflect on the transmigration of men, on their falling into hell, and on the torments in the world of Yama." The text urges "deep meditation . . . on the departure of the individual soul from this body and its new birth in (another) womb, and on its wanderings through ten thousand millions of existences." So also one must "recognize by the practice of meditation the progress of the individual soul through beings of various kinds." The literal passage through past and future lives and the attendant pain become the content of a cognitive passage which constitutes a spiritual initiation in this life calculated to deliver one from the literal reality. *Manu* declares that one "attains eternal Brahman by the practice of [such] meditation."109 In this sense, then, reflection or meditation upon such passage is a desirable, indeed a necessary soteriological activity. The difficult and dramatic passage which is undesirable as a literal event is desirable and necessary as a cognitive event.

Reflection or meditation upon one's eternal passage from womb to womb may be termed an "interior" passage to the extent that it takes place as a purely cognitive exercise. Relatedly, the soteriological "passage" to eternity or immortality which had previously been seen as an external passage correlated with the sacrificial ritual now also becomes an interior passage to the center or heart of man. It is no longer an external passage to a mythologically conceived heaven. The interior passage is made possible through meditation and knowledge rather than external performance. The symbolism, however, often remains "dramatic." *Chandogya Upanifad* 3, 13 speaks of the five doorkeepers of the heavenly world which must be known and passed in order to reach the highest heaven. 110 Yet, "what the space outside of a person is that is the same as what the space within a person is. Verily, what the space

within a person isthat is the same as what the space here within the heart is." 111 Therefore, one actually makes a cognitive passage within until one reaches the heart or mind located at man's "center," which is the homologue of the heavenly world and simultaneously a symbol of the Atman. In a related fashion, the *Chandogya Upanisad* observes: "As far, verily, as this world space (*ayam akasa*) extends, so far extends the space within the heart."112 Thus, within one's deepest self is found *"the real city of Brahma"* toward which one travels.113 Relatedly, the *Maitri Upanisad* speaks of striking down the guardian to the door of Brahma, namely, egoism (*ahamkara*)and *"having slain him*, having *crossed over* with the raft of the syllable *Om* to the other side of the space in the heart, in the inner space which gradually becomes manifest, one should enter the hall of Brahma, as a miner seeking minerals enters into the mine."114

It is from here only a short step to the entire phenomenon of yoga and its relation to release. Yogic symbolism, however, will not be explored here in detail. A very few well known and early examples must suffice. *Chandogya Upanisad* 8, 6, 6 states, "There are a hundred and one channels of the heart. One of these passes up to the crown of the head. Going up by it, one goes to immortality."115 *Svetasvatara Upanisad* 2, 8 instructs, "Holding his body steady with the three (upper parts) erect, and causing the senses with the mind to enter into the heart, a wise man with the Brahma-boat should *cross over* all the fear-bringing streams." Here the Brahma-boat of meditation has replaced the external sacrifice as the vehicle of passage, for, as *Mundaka Upanisad* 1, 2, 7 declares, "Unsafe boats are these sacrificial forms." Those who utilize them "go again to old age and death." *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 21 speaks of the channel called *susumna* leading upward into the crown of the head. One mounts it by meditation upon the syllable *Om:* "Now, as a spider mounting up by means of his thread obtains free space, thus, assuredly, indeed, does that meditator, mounting up by means of *Om*, obtain independence" *(svatantrya).* Here clearly the old "exterior" symbolism of ascent-passage has been revalorized as an interior passage facilitated by meditation.

In conclusion, both the "external journey" and the "internal journey" may be described as a *tapta-marga*, a "heated passage." In each case *tapas* not only accompanies the journey but also makes the journey possible. The external passage, associated with external sacrifice, is effected through the ascetic endeavor of the *yajamana.* The internal passage, by contrast, is effected through the meditative *tapas* of cognitive "brooding," which is in turn facilitated by "traditional" ascetic forms.

Conclusions

The central meaning of $\sqrt{tap}$ is "to give out heat," "to be hot." Relatedly, the noun *tapas* is most basically rendered as "heat" or "warmth." On the literal or natural level this heat is most clearly associated with the fire and the sun, both of which are possessors of *tapas* and emit *tapas* from themselves. The *tapas* of Agni in particular has numerous ramifications. It is, for example, a destructive heat capable of consuming or repelling various enemies, particularly the demonic *rakasas.* The *tapas* of Agni also facilitates his own birth, however, particularly when he is regarded as emerging from the heat generated through friction and the kindling process. In this regard his *tapas* has a creative connotation.

The destructive and creative effects of Agni's *tapas* are often interrelated. The fire destroys the victim at the sacrifice as well as the sacrificer at his own funeral and yet this very "consumption" delivers man to rebirth in the heavenly world. Although the tap-action of the sun is occasionally destructive, it has for the most part a creative and generative effect. The sun heats ($\sqrt{tap}$) downward and as such provides the "ripening" heat or *tapas* necessary for fertilizing the fields and maturing organic life. It is also the sun's own *tapas* that facilitates its rebirth or ascent out of the embryonic darkness of the night. The *tapas* of both the sun and the celestial fire also generates rain. This is particularly true of Agni who, as lightning, "quickens" or kindles the rain, sending it on its way. So, too, the Aavins generate an atmospheric heat which "whips up" the rain and sends it downward from the oceans above.

This fructifying and fertilizing *tapas* manifests itself also as the heat related to biological procreation. Just as the sun ripens organic life through *tapas*, so also is heat necessary for the "ripening" or maturation of embryos

and the related hatching of eggs. In this context $\sqrt{tap}$-derivatives frequently assume the connotation of "brooding upon." This heat is a heat of "incubation." The natural heat necessary for biological procreation manifests itself also in the *tapas* of sexual desire. Relatedly, the heat of sexual excitation is also indicated by *tapas,* as is the heat generated through intercourse. *Tapas* in this last context is related to the heat of orgasm. In this regard there is a clear relation between the *tapas* of sexual intercourse and the "churning" of the fire-sticks that gives birth to Agni through the *tapas* of friction. *Tapas* characterizes not only the heat of sexual arousal, however, but also the heat of sexual effort and fatiguethe sense of becoming "disjointed." This is reflected particularly in the figure of Prajapati, who becomes wearied through *tapas* in his act of cosmogonic generation; his disjointedness is the birth or creation of the cosmos itself. The *tapas* that manifests itself in biological production is largely a "natural," we might say, involuntary heat. Also of an involuntary nature is the undesirable heat of pain and suffering. Such pain may be either physical or mental. As physical pain *tapas* is frequently associated with fever; as mental suffering it takes the form of heartache, jealousy, or anguish.

The *tapas* emitted by the fire not only drives away and destroys the enemies of Vedic man, it also imparts heat to those who labor "devotedly" nearby. This generates not an undesirable "fever" ($\sqrt{tap}$)but rather a "devotional fervor" ($\sqrt{tap}$).Generating such heat, the student, the ascetic, the priest, and the sacrificer are separated thereby from a "given" or profane condition. The *tapas* they generate and accumulate in this context has a somewhat magical, certainly sacred property. It courses through their being as "heated power." Unlike the forms of *tapas* just mentioned, this heat has an extra-natural quality which enables man to become a power-bearer, a charged individual. Crucially, man may develop or generate such "magical heat" within himself through the performance of various self-imposed austerities, such as fasting or chastity. Through the "heated effort" of asceticism (i.e., $\sqrt{tap}$) man inflicts a certain "pain" (i.e., $\sqrt{tap}$)upon himself. In that such austerities generate heat within man, they too are regarded as a form of *tapas. Tapas* refers therefore not only to heated power but also to the heated effort which produces it. The ascetic pain of *tapas,* now desirable and self-imposed, remains transparent, however, to an undesirable and involuntary pain.

The accumulated *tapas* of asceticism "saturates" the devotee, making him a reservoir of heated potency. This power may manifest itself as a sexual and fecundating energy which when released generates rainfall, fertile fields, and biological offspring. Through an asceticism that "overcomes" nature, man is able to control nature. The ascetic heat that he generates, however,

remains transparent toand is homologized withthe natural heat that accomplishes the same ends. We see here, as we see throughout, the incomparable ability of *tapas* to connect various levels of reality. Just as atmospheric heat causes raindrops to appear, so the self-imposed asceticism ($\sqrt{tap}$) and devotional fervor ($\sqrt{tap}$) of sacrificer and priest cause sweat to form. Ritual sweat is, however, regarded as a homeopathic homologue of the raindrops. Such sweat *(tapas)* is further identified with the heated milk boiling within the sacrificial cauldron *(tapta gharma).* This vessel is heated by the *tapas* of Agni and the sun, but also by the ascetic heat ($\sqrt{tap}$) and devotional fervor ($\sqrt{tap}$)of the ritual participants. Again, however, the heat of sexual production is clearly indicated, for the heated cauldron erupts into an orgasm of creative fecundity in which the heated milk is further equated with semen and sap.

Relatedly, just as a natural heat yields biological birth, so the self-generated *tapas* of asceticism is required for man's spiritual rebirth. Through a self-imposed *tapas* man facilitates his spiritual rebirth just as the natural heat of *tapas* facilitates his biological birth. Through asceticism the *diksita-yajamana* establishes himself as an embryo, bears himself as an embryo, and "matures" himself as an embryo in a state of "incubating heat." While in a state of *tapas* he builds the altar which is his embryonic second-self. The ascetic heat necessary for spiritual rebirth is therefore often transparent to the natural heat associated with biological generation. The sacrificer, for example, imposes a fast upon himself just as the embryo is regarded as fasting "naturally" while in the womb.

The transparency of ascetic heat to natural heat is also seen in the development of *tapas* as a means of spiritual purification and atoning penance. That external heat which consumed the *rakasas* and thereby purified sacrificial utensils and the sacrificial procedure came in time to be seen as an internal fire which "burns out" the impurity of the sacrificer himself. *Tapas* purifies because it "consumes" evil. This destructive yet beneficial power of *tapas* is, however, self-generated through ascetic activity just as is the pain of mortification self-imposed. Through asceticism the sacrificer

purifies himself of a profane state. Relatedly, *tapas* comes to be seen as equivalent to penance, yielding atonement for specific transgressions and evil deeds. The "atoning heat" of penance consumes man's evil as a fire consumes dry leaves.

The convergent and divergent meanings of $\sqrt{tap}$-derivatives are particularly evident in the relation of heat to knowledge. For example, the heat assumed by the devotee in the presence of the sacred fire makes him susceptible to visions and divine revelation. Agni, himself a seer, provides the devotee with "head-heat," turning him into a seer as well. Relatedly, the heated effort of ascetic practice kindles an "inner fire" of illumination, yielding

ecstatic insight. Like the paradigmatic rsis, the earthly ascetic is able to "see" or behold through his *tapas*, through his self-imposed austerity. In this context his *tapas* takes the form of "cognitive brooding," or "intense meditation." The power which is *tapas* is clearly here a "contemplative power." Once again, however, we see a clear transparency to that natural heat generated by a hen as she broods over her eggs. Relatedly, visions mature in the heated mind just as crops mature and ripen upon a gently heated earth. In this context the *diksita-yajamana* may be perceived as an embryo in the womb of knowledge, "hatching" through ascetic heat to spiritual rebirth.

Tapas as contemplative power is particularly significant in the Upanisads, wherein the meditating ascetic progressively reduces all plurality to unity in the *moksa-granting* Atman/Brahman identity. Through *tapas* one apprehends the cosmic ground. *Tapas*, however, as meditative knowledge is not simply a means of apprehending reality; it is an inherent quality of ultimate reality itself. In *tapas* epistemology joins ontology. When *tapas* as ontological "ground" is apprehended through *tapas* as meditative power, it is *tapas* which knows itself through *tapas*. In this context we may speak of ascetic celebration and, relatedly, interpret *tapas* as an ecstatic heat, as a heat of rapture.

The innovative *jñana-kanda* sought to differentiate such meditative and contemplative *tapas* from the sacrificial *tapas* of the ritual. It sought to differentiate between a *tapas* associated with *karma* and exertion and a *tapas* associated with *jñana* and contemplative "brooding" (*abhi-tap*). The orthodox *karma-kanda*, however, sought synthesis and assimilation. As a consequence, the two forms of *tapas* conceptually differentiated by the early Upanisads are again united in the ascetic practice of the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasin*. That *tapas* associated with exertion and self-denial is placed in the service of meditative brooding and contemplative power. Traditional ascetic forms such as fasting, *brahmacarya*, isolation, and *pranayama* are now seen as a means of facilitating meditation and that "higher," contemplative *tapas* which apprehends reality itself.

Tapas as "contemplative power" relatedly makes possible an initiatory journey to release. Because of the necessity and prevalence of *tapas*, this journey may be termed a "heated passage." So, too, may the initiatory scenario of the ritual process from *Diksa* to *Avabhrtha* be referred to as a heated passage. As a consequence, both the external and the internal journeys to salvation may be termed a *tapta-marga*. It is, indeed, as *tapta-marga* that asceticism and initiation are most evidently united in the Veda. Not only may each *asrama* be called a *tapta-marga*, however, but the entire *asrama* system itself and, therewith, the ideal career of the Aryan twice-born. Vedic man was

conceived and generated through *tapas*. Thereafter *tapas* ideally facilitated his passage through the four life-stages. Or he could be transported to heaven, again by *tapas*. Clearly the Vedic path wasfrom beginning to enda *tapta-marga*.

The variegated and ubiquitous forms of *tapas* seem almost endless. *Tapas* reveals itself in a multitude of dynamic forms: consuming heat, incubating heat, impregnating heat, kindling heat, orgasmic heat, hatching heat, lustful heat, jealous heat, painful heat, contemplative heat, devotional heat, revelatory heat, ecstatic heat, purifying heat, atoning heat. *Tapas* must also be seen, as indicated, as both process and product. Through *tapas* one generates *tapas*. *Tapas* is conspicuously active and creative at every level of reality. Not only is it perceived as the force behind creation, it permeates, as we have seen, nearly every avenue and every aspect of that creation. The final significance of *tapas* lies, however, not simply in its ubiquitous quality. Nor can its significance be fully understood by analyzing its role at the human, the ritual, or the cosmogonic levels. The real importance of *tapas* lies in its synthesizing capacity, in its incomparable ability to establish identities. This issue has in fact been a leitmotif of our entire presentation. The imagery of weaving and "weaving

together" which we suggested in discussing the sacrifice may again, and with equal justification, be used here. *Tapas* may be seen as the heated shuttle within a cosmic and conceptual loom, weaving together all levels of reality. Through the connecting capacity of *tapas* "above" and "below," "then" and "now," the natural and the ritual are interplaited as warp and woof. And he who knows these "connections" is himself "connected," woven into the primal fabric of the Real. It is therefore not surprising for *Manu* to note that even the gods declare the power of *tapas* to be "incomparable" (11, 245). Indeed:

> All the bliss of gods and men is declared by the sages to whom the Veda was revealed, to have *tapas* for its root, *tapas* for its middle, and *tapas* for its end (11, 235).

Notes

Introduction

1. M. Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1958), p. 3.

2. Ibid. Italics mine.

3. See M. Eliade, *The Quest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 10.

4. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 5. Emphasis his.

5. D. Knipe, *In the Image of Fire* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), p. 108.

6. Translation by C. Blair, *Heat in the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda*, American Oriental Society Publication, no. 45 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 73.

7. Knipe has also drawn attention to this imperfect passive construction, suggesting that *tapas* is both "something to perform" and a "cosmic entity" (Knipe, p. 1 17).

8. U. Vesci, *Heat and Sacrifice in the Vedas* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985), p. 22.

9. See Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 106.

10. See for example, *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana* 3, 20, 16. See also Knipe, p. 117n.

11. See Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 108.

12. Ibid., p. 107.

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13. The interested reader may in this context see also chapter 3 of Knipe's work.

14. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 107.

15. For a definition of these terms see J. Kitagawa, "Primitive, Classical, and Modern Religions: A Perspective on Understanding the History of Religions," in *The History of Religions: Essays on the Problem of Understanding*, ed. J. Kitagawa (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

16. The typological or morphological distinction here drawn between "womb" imagery on the one hand and "passage" imagery on the other is, I believe, my own, although it is suggested implicitly in the work of Eliade. See, in particular, M. Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958).

17. The typological or morphological distinction between "easy" and "dramatic" is Eliade's.

18. Eliade, *Initiation*, p. 87.

19. See Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 331.

20. See in this context Knipe, pp. 79-89.

21. The term *tapta-marga* is, to the best of my knowledge, of my own creation. Despite its persistent applicability to Vedic thought and practice the term does not, I believe, appear in the literature. It suggests a parallel to the later terms *karma-mdrga, jñana-marga,* and *bhakti-marga.*

22. This descriptive phrase is used by-and no doubt also coined by-A. L. Basham in *The Wonder That Was India* (New York: Grove Press, 1954), p. 241.

23. Our reference here is to the sacrificial rite of royal consecration, the *Rajasuya.*

24. I.e., *ka* ("who").

25. J. Gonda, "The Popular Prajapati," *History of Religions* 22 (1982): 130.

26. Ibid., p. 131.

27. Ibid., pp. 143, 148.

28. J. Koller, *The Indian Way* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 38-39.

29. Relatedly, *Satapatha Brahmana* 8, 3, 1, 34 notes that grace and joy dwell in *yajiia.*

30. See J. Gonda, *"Bandhu*- in the Brahmanas," *Adyar Library Bulletin* 29 (1965): 3.

31. See Knipe, chapter 2.

32. L. Renou, *Religions of Ancient India* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 18.

33. Ibid. Heesterman is of a similar opinion: "The point at issue for the Vedic thinker is not to disentangle and differentiate conceptually different entities and notions but to realize, to know, their connections." J. C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1957), p. 6.

34. Knipe, p. 29. Knipe, appropriately, cites Gonda in this context: "Mantras and Sutras belong together and are only intelligible when studied together."

35. W. O'Flaherty, *Siva: The Erotic Ascetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 13.

36. See J. Kitagawa, ed., *The History of Religions: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1985), p. 57.

37. R. Pettazzoni, "The Supreme Being: Phenomenological Structure and Historical Development," in *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology* ed. M. Eliade and J. Kitagawa (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 59-66.

38. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. xx.

39. See Kitagawa, *Understanding*, p. 42.

40. The persistent endeavor to reconcile, integrate, or harmonize the "historical" and "phenomenological" approaches to religion is nowhere more evident than at the 1983 University of Chicago conference on method. The publication that emerged from those proceedings-The *History of Religions: Retrospect and Pros*pect-continually and explicitly illustrates

(e.g., pp. 94, 148, 156, 171) how this endeavor has been and continues to be central to the methodology of *Religionswissenschaft.*

41. W. O'Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 18-19.

42. Ibid., p. 19.

Chapter One

1. See also *Atharva Veda* 8, 2, 14; 7, 69, 1; *Rg Veda* 2, 24, 9.

2. See also *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 3, 6.

3. See *Atharva Veda* 13, 2, 4; 7, 69, 1.

4. See ibid. 4, 26, 3.

5. See ibid. 13, 1, 10.

6. Unless otherwise indicated, translations from the *Atharva Veda* are taken from W. D. Whitney, trans., *Atharva Veda Samhita*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950).

7. J. A. B. van Buitenen, *The Pravargya* (Poona: Deccan College, 1968), pp. 29 ff.

8. See also *Taittiriya Aranyaka* 4, 8, 4; *Apastamba Srauta Sutra 1 5*, 10, 1-5.

9. Agni is characterized by *tapas* throughout Vedic literature. See, for example, *Taittiriya Samhita* 4, 2, 11, 4; *Vajasaneyi Samhita* 2, 9, 11.

10. Heesterman, *Royal Consecration*, p. 46.

11. Ibid., p. 47.

12. See, for example, *Aitareya Brahmana 1*, 2, 3, 1.

13. Unless otherwise indicated, translations from this text are from A. B. Keith, trans., *The Veda of the Black Yajus School Entitled Taittiriya Sanhita*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914).

14. R. Griffith, trans., *The Texts of the White Yajurveda* (Banaras: E. J. Lazarus, 1957), p. 21; O'Flaherty, *Women*, p. 55.

15. See, for example, *Rg Veda 1*, 112, 7; 1, 119, 6; 7, 70, 2. See also Blair, p. 157.

16. See Blair, p. 153.

17. A. Bergaigne, *La Religion Vedique, II* (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1878-97), pp. 433-34.

18. P. Olivelle, "Renouncer and Renunciation in the *Dharmasastras,"* in *Studies in Dharmasastra*, ed. R. Lariviere (Calcutta: Firma KLM Privat Limited, 1984), p. 85. See also P. Olivelle, "Rites of Passage: Hindu Rites," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, et al. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 390.

19. This was already noted by Oldenberg. H. Oldenberg, *Die Weltanschauung der Brahmana-Texts* (Goettingen: Bandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1919), p. 148. More recently, Gonda has observed that *tapas* and *brahmacarya* are often viewed as identical in the Vedic literature. J. Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1965), p. 295.

20. *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 3, 2, 17.

21. J. W. Hauer, *Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis in alten Indien* (Berlin: W. Kohlhammer, 1922), p. 84.

22. Rsyasrnga, for example, who lived in a hermitage and had never seen a woman brings down rain in streams during a terrible drought solely by the power of his *tapas (Mahabharata* 3, 110, 24).

23. See, for example, *Jaiminiya Brahmana* 2, 404 ff.; *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 21, 17, 18; *Latyayana Srauta Sutra* 4, 3, 9, ff.; *Katyayana Srauta Sutra* 13, 3; *Drahyayana Srauta Sutra* 11, 3, 9 ff.

24. J. Gonda, "Ascetics and Courtesans," *Adyar Library Bulletin* 25 (1961): 80-81.

25. Eliade, *Yoga*, pp. 104-105.

26. Gonda, "Ascetics," p. 89.

27. Ibid., p. 90. See also M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 332ff.

28. Gonda, "Ascetics," p. 90.

29. O'Flaherty, *Women*, p. 39.

30. Gobhila Grhya Sutra 3, 2, 17; 3, 2, 13-14.

31. See H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda* (Berlin: W. Hertz, 1894), p. 421.

32. *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 3, 2, 29. Unless otherwise indicated all translations from the Grhya Sutras are taken from H. Oldenberg, trans., *The Grhya Sutras*, 2 vols., Sacred Books of the East. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964). The ascetic *vrata* is, in fact, itself equated with rainwater *(Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 3, 2, 21).

33. *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 3, 2, 20.

34. Oldenberg, *Religion*, pp. 421-422.

35. Unless otherwise indicated, translations from the Dharma Sutras are taken from G. Bühler, trans., The Sacred Laws of the Aryas, 2 vols., Sacred Books of the East (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965).

36. See, for example, *Taittiriya Samhita* 1, 28; 2, 4, 9, 2; 6, 3, 6, 4.

37. See chapter 2.

38. Oldenberg, *Religion*, pp. 403, 423.

39. See *Aitareya Brahmana* 7, 13.

40. See *Manu* 2, 167; *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 5, 7, 4.

41. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 2, 2, 5, 16.

42. Oldenberg, *Religion*, p. 423.

43. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra 1*, 2, 7, 11.

44. *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 3, 1, 20. There appears to be a contradiction here between the prohibition on bathing and the prohibition against seeking refuge from the rain during the *Sakvari Vrata*. Religiously, however, this is apparently not as prob-

lematic as it might be for a more secular or logical mind: rainwater and bathwater obviously appear to have very different properties here.

45. See *Taittiriya Samhita* 3, 1, 1, 2. See also *Aitareya Brahmana* 7, 13; Oldenberg, *Religion*, p. 425.

46. See the discussion by Oldenberg, *Religion*, p. 427.

47. Heesterman, *Royal Consecration*, p. 215.

48. Ibid., p. 217.

49. Ibid., p. 218. Italics mine.

50. See, for example, *Apastamba Grhya Sutra* 4, 10, 8; *Hiranyakesi Grhya Sutra* 2, 6, 13; 1, 9, 18; *Paraskara Grhya Sutra* 2, 1, 23; *Manava Grhya Sutra* 1, 21, II.

51. Heesterman, *Royal Consecration*, p. 215.

52. See, for example, *Rg Veda* 8, 103, 8.

53. Particularly the *adhvaryu*, who performs the manual operations at the sacrifice.

54. Translation by Blair, p. 24.

55. See, for example, *Rg Veda* 1, 86, 8.

56. The term is taken from Blair, p. 24.

57. See, for example, *Kausika Sutra* 47, 44. See also Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 106.

58. See, for example, *Taittiriya Samhita* 2, 4, 10, 2.

59. Translation by Blair, p. 112.

60. See, for example, *Rg Veda* 8, 89, 7 and 10, 169, 2, where the clouds are fashioned by *tapas*. See also Blair, p. 113.

61. See, for example, 1, 112, 7; 1, 169, 6; 3, 53, 14; 5, 30, 15; 5, 43, 7.

62. *Rg Veda* 10, 181, 3 notes that the *gharma* was, indeed, brought from the sun.

63. Compare *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 4, 8.

64. Blair, pp. 136ff.

65. Ibid., p. 5.

66. Van Buitenen, p. 11.

67. See *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 3, 6; 14, 1, 1, 10.

68. Van Buitenen, pp. 29ff.

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69. Ibid., p. 5.

70. See, for example, *Apastamba Srauta Sutra 1 5*, 10, 1.

71. Italics mine. Unless otherwise indicated translations from this text are taken from J. Eggeling, trans., *The Satapatha*

Brahmana, 5 vols., Sacred Books of the East (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964).

72. Van Buitenen, p. 34.

73. *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 15, 8, 16. Translation by van Buitenen, p. 94.

74. Van Buitenen, p. 34.

75. Ibid.

76. *Apastamba Srauta Sutra 1 5,* 4, 7.

77. The verb vi-√srj meaning "pouring forth" or discharging accompanies both nouns.

78. Van Buitenen, p. 34.

79. O'Flaherty, *Women*, p. 26.

80. Ibid., pp. 26; 43.

81. Ibid., p. 43.

82. Ibid., p. 26.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid., p. 50.

85. Ibid., p. 25.

86. Ibid., p. 39.

87. *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 15, 17, 1. Translation by van Buitenen.

88. See, for example, *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 2, 19.

89. See, for example, *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 3, 1, 2, where *tapas* fills the place otherwise filled by the sap, as, for example, in *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 2, 19.

90. See, for example, *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 2, 19.

91. See, for example, ibid., 14, 1, 1, 28.

92. See *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 15, 20, 1; *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 1, 29. This *Avantaradiksa* must be differentiated from the more common "intermediary consecration" of the normal *Agnistoma*, despite a similarity of name and certain traits.

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93. See, for example, *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 15, 20-21; *Manava Srauta Sutra* 4, 7, 1-9; 8, 1ff.

94. *Bharadvdja Srauta Sutra 11,* 21-22.

95. *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* 15, 20, 7.

Chapter Two

1. M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 410.

2. See, for example, *Satapatha Brahmana* 5, 3, 5, 17.

3. *Rg Veda* 10, 154, 5.

4. *Atharva Veda 11*, 1, 26.

5. Ibid., 6, 61, 1.

6. See, for example, ibid., 4, 34, 1; 6, 133, 4; 10, 7, 36.

7. See Monier-Williams, p. 1178.

8. *Atharva Veda* 8, 1, 10.

9. *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 5, 1, 1.

10. Ibid., 11, 4, 3, 1.

11. *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana* 3, 15, 1. Unless otherwise indicated translations from this text are taken from H. Oertel, trans., "The Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 16 (1896).

12. See Oldenberg, *Weltanschauung*, p. 168n.

13. Ibid., p. 170.

14. Ibid., p. 171.

15. Ibid., p. 176.

16. See Blair, p. 102.

17. See Knipe, p. 103. *Tapaso jatam tapaso vibhutam*.

18. Knipe, pp. 102-03.

19. Translation by Blair, p. 102.

20. Translation by Whitney.

21. *Taittiriya Samhita* 5, 1, 8, 2.

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22. Translation by Basham, p. 248.

23. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 5, 3, 16.

24. Ibid., 6, 6, 2, 8.

25. Translation by Blair, p. 104.

26. Ibid., p. 45. Perhaps the most vivid imagery found in the Veda correlating *tapas* with both sexual excitation and resultant fecundity is found at the *Pravargya*. (See chapter 1 for greater detail on the *Pravargya*.)Central to this rite, as articulated, is the heating ($\sqrt{tap}$)of the sacrificial cauldron or *gharma* and the milk which it contains. The cauldron has a semihuman but also a semiphallic shape. As the white liquid is heated and overflows the orgasmic imagery becomes evident. The milk is semen and, when heated, this semen is ejaculated for the purpose of procreation.

27. *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana 1*, 47, 7.

28. *Satapatha Brahmana 7*, 1, 1, 28.

29. See, for example, ibid. 3, 4, 3, 2.

30. *Taittiriya Samhita 1, 5, 9, 1* .

31. Ibid., 7, 1, 5. Italics mine.

32. Translations by R. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Rig Veda*, 2 vols. (Banaras: E. J. Lazarus, 1926).

33. *Katha Upanisad* 2, 1, 6.

34. *Satapatha Brahmana 11*, 6, 1, 2.

35. F. Edgerton, *The Bhagavad Gita*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 39 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1944), p. 27.

36. M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1927), p. 194.

37. P. Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanisads* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), p. 66.

38. See, in this context, H. Lommel, "Wiedergeburt aus Embryonalem Zustand in der Symbolic des Altindischen Rituals," in *Tod, Auferstehung, Weltordnung*, ed. by C. Hentze (Zurich: Origo, 1955); and Eliade, *Initiation*, pp. 53-57.

39. Translation by M. Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Sacred Books of the East (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964).

40. See Lommel, p. 126.

41. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 5, 4, 6.

42. Ibid., 11, 5, 4, 16.

43. *Apastamba Dharma Satra 1*, 1, 1, 15.

44. As opposed to a Sudra who is specifically termed *eka-jati* (born only once). That the student was regarded as the son of his teacher is further indicated in the prohibition of marriage between the student and his teacher's daughter, as she would thus be his "sister." In this context see Gonda, *Change*, p. 231.

45. *Aitareya Brahmana 1*, 3. Unless otherwise indicated translations from this text and the *Kausitaki Brahmana* are taken from A. B. Keith, trans., *Rig Veda Brahmanas*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1920).

46. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 1, 3, 28.

47. B. Lindner, in his translation of the *Diksa* as presented in the *Satapatha Brahmana (Die Diksa* [Leipzig: Pöschel & Trepte, 1878]) was perhaps the first to note clearly that *diksa* and *tapas* "finden sich sehr heufig verbunden" not only in the Brahmanas but also as early as the *Atharva Veda.*

48. "The *Angirases* going to the world of heaven placed in the waters *diksa* and *tapas."* Thus the sacrificer "bathes at a ford; for at a ford did they place *diksa* and *tapas."* Thus "verily visibly he secures *diksa* and *tapas."*

49. *Satapatha Brahmana* 13, 1, 7, 1.

50. *Aitareya Brahmana* 1, 3.

51. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 1, 2, 20.

52. *Taittiriya Samhita* 3, 7, 7, 1-2. Italics mine.

53. The equation of *tapas* and fasting is often expressed in the Brahmanas.

54. *Satapatha Brahmana* 9, 5, 1, 9.

55. Ibid., 10, 2, 5, 3.

56. Ibid., 3, 4, 4, 27.

57. Ibid., 3, 4, 4, 17.

58. *Taittiriya Samhita* 7, 2, 10, 3. Italics mine.

59. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 2, 1, 40.

60. *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 2, 5, 1.

61. Ibid., 6, 1, 10, 1.

62. Eggeling, part IV, p. 214n.

63. *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 4, 1 reads: "Prajapati alone, indeed, existed here in the beginning, 'How may I be reproduced?' He toiled [√*śram*] and performed *tapas*. He generated Agni [in this context, the sacrifice]."

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64. *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 6, 5, 2.

65. Ibid., 10, 1, 1, 3.

66. Ibid., 6, 1, 1, 5.

67. Ibid., 5, 1, 3, 20.

68. Ibid., 6, 2, 1, 9.

69. Ibid., 6, 4, 4, 19.

70. Ibid., 6, 5, 1, 12.

71. Ibid., 6, 5, 1, 11.

72. Ibid., 6, 4, 1, 3.

73. Ibid., 6, 6, 1, 22.

74. Ibid., 10, 2, 5, 3.

75. Ibid., 10, 2, 5, 9.

76. See Gonda, *Change,* p. 295; Oldenberg, *Weltanschauung,* p. 148.

77. W. Kaelber, *"Tapas,* Birth, and Spiritual Rebirth in the Veda," *History of Religions* 15 (1976). See, in particular, pp. 351-355.

78. O'Flaherty, *Women;* see pp. 17-33.

79. A mantra-charm of the *Atharva Veda* for successful pregnancy states: "Hold apart the womb, for the placing of the embryo, put in a son" *(Atharva Veda* 6, 81, 2). The *garbha* (womb) is here equated with the son to be born and it is the son in the form of the *garbha* that exists first within the male and is then placed into the female womb. We may also cite *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 19, 5-6: "As the earth is pregnant with Agni, as the heaven is with Indra pregnant, as Vayu dwells in the womb of the regions, thus I [i.e., the husband] place an embryo into thy womb . . . May a male embryo enter they womb, as an arrow the quiver." Further on: "Put into her an embryo . . . ; a male, thou male, put into her." *Atharva Veda* 9, 10, 12 makes it explicit that the father sets the *garbha* in the womb.

80. See also *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 6, 4, 20-22; *Rg Veda* 5, 4, 10; 6, 70, 3.

81. *Atharva Veda* 3, 6, 1.

82. *Chandogya Upanisad* 2, 13, 2.

83. *Aitareya Upanisad* 2, 4, 2. Italics mine. Unless otherwise indicated translations from the Upanisads are taken from R. E. Hume, trans., *The Thirteen Principal* Upanisads (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921).

84. *Sakhayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 17, 5.

85. *Taittiriya Samhita 5*, 6, 8, 4.

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86. Monier-Williams, p. 349.

87. O'Flaherty, *Women*, pp. 32, 39.

88. Ibid., p. 44; see also her ninth chapter.

89. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 2, 1, 1.

90. See, for example, H. Hubert and M. Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

91. See chapter 8.

92. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11,2, 1, 1.

93. Ibid.

94. B. K. Smith, "Gods and Men in Vedic Ritualism: Toward a Hierarchy of Resemblance," *History of Religions* 24 (1985): 296, 298.

95. *Satapatha Brahmana* 13, 8, 1, 17.

96. Smith, p. 299.

97. Blair, p. 7.

98. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 4, 3, 2.

99. Ibid., 2, 3, 3, 5.

100. Ibid., 2, 3, 3, 2.

101. Vesci, pp. 30, 32.

102. Ibid., p. 32.

103. Ibid., p. 41.

104. *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 4, 3, 9.

105. *Rg Veda* 10, 14, 8; *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 1, 8, 6.

106. See, for example, *Rg Veda* 10, 16, 7; 10, 16, 9.

107. *Atharva Veda* 8, 4, 9.

108. *Rg Veda* 10, 154.

109. See also *Atharva Veda* 18, 2; *Rg Veda* 10, 14; Knipe, p. 133.

110. The correlation between *tapas* and spiritual rebirth at the paradigmatic level is clearly seen in the great role assigned to both sun and fire as symbols and models of rebirth. With the possible exception of Prajapati, no other deities of the entire Veda are more clearly characterized by *both tapas* and rebirth than are the sun and fire.

The sun, as noted, is a *tapasvin.* At *Vajasaneyi Samhita 37,* 11and elsewhere Surya

(the sun) is explicitly characterized by and then equated with *tapas. Rg Veda* 10, 60, 11 notes that the sun (i.e., Surya) heats (√tap) downward. *Rg Veda* 2, 24, 9 speaks of the heating (√tap) sun who freely heats (√tap). That the sun is a symbol of rebirth is predicated upon the observable fact that the sun rises anew each day, emerging from the realm of death through which it moves in the course of the night. This rising each morning is clearly regarded as a rebirth in the Vedic texts. *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 3, 1, 3 very graphically states: "When he [i.e., the sun] sets, then he, as an embryo, enters the womb. . . The reason, then, why the night envelops that (sun), is that embryos also are, as it were, enveloped." *Atharva Veda* 13, 1, 16 notes that the sun clothes himself in the embryo of the earth. Heesterman is hence quite correct in observing that "the sunrise is the macrocosmic correspondence of birth" (Heesterman, *Royal Consecration,* p. 47; 160n.). *Atharva Veda* 13, 2, 25 states: "The sun hath mounted the sky *with tapas, rich in tapas he comes to the womb, he is born again"* (italics mine).

The sun, characterized by *tapas* and rebirth, in fact, reborn through *tapas,* hence forms a perfect paradigm for the *diksita.* As Gonda has observed: "There exists a whole mythico-iconographic complex which presents the sun as descending into darkness even as a novice, as an embryo, enters the uterine darkness of the initiatory hut. When the sun rises in the morning, the world is reborn, but with this process the ritual rebirth of the *diksita* . . . may be regarded as running parallel" (Gonda, *Change,* p. 366). The sun in *Atharva Veda* 2, 5, 6 is explicitly termed a *diksita.* The sacrificer at the New and Full Moon Sacrifices observes: "I move along the path that Surya travels" *(Vajasaneyi Samhita* 2, 26). At the *Rajasuya* also, the king or sacrificer quite evidently takes the sun as his model or paradigm for his repeated rebirths, as Heesterman has noted *(Royal Consecration,* pp. 136, 198). At *Satapatha Brahmana 2*, 3, 1, 1-3, the *Agnihotra* sacrifice and also the sacrificer himself are equated with the sun. The embryonic condition of the sun and his rebirth are thus homologized with in that they constitute the model forthe rebirth of the sacrificer.

Agni, the fire, is repeatedly characterized as emerging from the womb. *Satapatha Brahmana* 6, 3, 1, 26 states: "It is from the womb that he who is born is born; and from the womb Agni shall be born when he is born." These wombs of Agni are multiple, as we saw, for example, at the *Agnicayana.* Frequently cited are the terrestrial waters. In this context *Satapatha Brahmana* 6, 8, 2, 4 notes: "In the waters, O Agni, is thy womb; . . . being in the womb thou art born again." Also cited as wombs for Agni are the atmospheric waters. The earth is also frequently cited: "Even as a mother bears her son, earth hath borne Agni within her womb" (*Vajasaneyi Samhita* 12, 61). Also cited are various material components of the sacrifice, such as the firepan at the *Agnicayana.* Perhaps the most prevalent mode of birth experienced by Agni is, as noted, through the churning of the kindling sticks, both mythically and at the ritual. *Rg Veda* 10, 69, 3 notes: "Still newest is the face of thine, O Agni, which Manu and Samitra have enkindled." *Rg Veda* 10, 79, 7 notes that Agni is born in wood. The *Satapatha Brahmana* terms the householder's hearth Agni's pertetual womb, "whence born thou wert enkindled." Like the sun who is repeatedly reborn, Agni is regarded as "born many a time" (*Rg Veda* 10, *5,* 1). He is also and often referred to as "born anew" (*Vdjasaneyi Samhita* 12, 36).

Significantly, just as the sun is seen effecting his rebirth (or ascent) through *tapas,* so Agni's birth is frequently predicated upon or linked with *tapas. Katha Upanisad* 4, 6 notes that Agni "was born of old from *tapas." Taittiriya Samhita* 4, 2, 11, 4 notes that Agni is born "of the *tapas* of Agni. *" Vajasaneyi Samhita* 29, 1 states that Agni waxes by strong *tapas* and is thus born quickly. *Taittiriya Samhita* 10, 1, 11, (1) attributes Agni's birth to the waxing of *tapas.* It is in the churning of the kindling sticks that the correlation of *tapas* and Agni's births is most evident. *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana* 1, 47, 7 notes that fire issues from *tapas*, and that birth issues from the churned, from the thoroughly heated (*samtaptat*). Like the sun, so also Agni thus affords an excellent model for the sacrificer. That the

sacrificer is homologized with Agni need not again be developed here. Suffice it to say that perhaps the most evident example occurs at the *Agnicayana,* where the sacrificer to be reborn is homologized with Agni.

111. I refer here only to Vesci's *Heat and Sacrifice in the Vedas* and not to any more recent publications which may (as projected) have been forthcoming. Although she has many insightful observations regarding the role of heat at the ritualparticularly its energizing, purifying, and transforming powershe confines herself almost exclusively to the natural heat generated by the fire. As a consequence, she appears oblivious to the many other forms or dimensions of *tapasnot* to mention their interrelatednessin Vedic literature. In particular, the ascetic dimension of *tapas* finds no place in her work and the glossary erroneously states that only in the present day does *tapas* refer to ascetic acts or austerities (p. 306).

112. Ibid., p. 60.

Chapter Three

1. The consuming heat of Agni, for example, is double-edged. It is both creative and destructive. The sacrificial victim is consumed by the *tapas* of Agni; it is "destroyed. " Yet it is simultaneously given life in heaven. This is clear at *Rg Veda* 10, 16, 4 where the root *tap* must be translated as "burn up" or "consume." It is, however, precisely these consuming flames which bring the sacrificial victim directly to heaven as the verse makes clear. It is also Agni as the cremation fire who supplies the human corpse with *tapas* and thus facilitates its ascent to heaven (see Blair, p. 7; *Atharva Veda* 18, 4, 9; 11, 1, 4). *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 4, 8 notes that Agni as the cremation fire consumes ($\sqrt{tap}$) the body of the sacrificer at his funeral and thus he is born again in the heavenly world. See chapter 2.

2. Monier-Williams, p. 436.

3. There are, in fact, thirty-one verses in which "some form of the root *tap* or one of its derivatives" connote destructive heat directed against an enemy (Blair, p. 81). The form *tapus,* for example, connotes destructive heat in eleven of the sixteen passages in which the word appears. Outside of Book Ten, this is also the most common meaning of the word *tapas.* (Blair, p. 51).

4. *tapo sv' agne antaran amitrdn/tapa Sansam ararusah parasya/tapo vaso cikatano acittan* .. .Blair, p. 10. Translations in this chapter from the *Rg Veda* and *Atharva Veda* are taken from Blair unless otherwise indicated.

5. *tapa vrsan visvatah socisa tan*

6. Blair, p. 83.

7. Italics mine.

8. Blair, p. 7.

9. Destructive *tapas* is, for example, directed against sorcerers and false worshipers (*Rg Veda* 10, 87, 14) as well as against false friends (*Rg Veda* 10, 89, 12) and Brahmin-haters (*Rg Veda* 3, 30, 17). See also *Rg Veda* 10, 68, 6; 2, 30, 4.

10. *tejisthaya tapani raksasas tapa/ye tva nide dadhire drstaviryam*

11. *vidhya raksasas tapisthaih.*

12. *ni mayinas tapusa raksaso daha*

13. See, for example, *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 1, 3, 13-18; 5, 3, 5, 16.

14. Ibid., 1, 1, 4, 1.

15. Ibid., 1, 1, 4, 4.

16. *Vajasaneyi Samhita* 1, 7.

17. Griffith, *White Yajur Veda*, p. 3n.

18. See G. V. Devasthali, *Religion and Mythology of the Brahmanas* (Poona: University of Poona, 1965), pp. 86-87.

19. *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 2, 2, 13.

20. Ibid., 3, 4, 3, 8.

21. See, for example, *Baudhayana Dharma Sastra* 1, 6, 14, 1.

22. *kratum punanah kavibhih pavitraih*

23. See also *Taittiriya Samhita* 4, 6, 1.

24. Ibid., 1, 3, 14, (z).

25. *Manu* 11, 242; italics mine. Unless otherwise indicated translations from this text are taken from G. Bühler, trans., *The Laws of Manu*, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 25 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1964).

26. Or "burnt up," destroyed.

27. Monier-Williams, p. 436.

28. Ibid., p. 437.

29. Cited in Blair, pp. 107, 29.

30. Ibid., p. 107.

31. Ibid., p. 106.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., p. 29n.

34. *jaya tapyate kitavasya hina* . . .

35. *striyam drstvaya kitavam tatapa/anyesam jaydm sukrtam ca yonim*

36. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 1, 3, 18; 3, 1, 2, 8, 3, 1, 2, 2.

37. Ibid., 3, 1, 3, 18.

38. *Taittiriya Samhita* 45, 1, 1, 2.

39. *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 1, 2, 20. See also *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 1, 1, 2, where *tapas* and *diksa* purify the sacrificer.

40. Griffith, *White Yajur Veda*, p. 30n.

41. See also, for example, *Atharva Veda* 19, 41; 19, 43; 9, 1, 1.

42. *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 7, 1.

43. Ibid., 5, 3, 5, 16.

44. See, for example, ibid., 9, 5, 1, 2-9; 13, 1, 7, 1; 11, 4, 3, 1; 2, 5, 1, 1.

45. Ibid., 10, 4, 4, 3.

46. See Monier-Williams, p. 437.

47. We speak here structurally and not necessarily chronologically. It must, of course, be realized that the generation of "magical" heat within the body is in many ways an archaic and universal practice, as we noted in our introduction. These archaic beliefs and practices can by no means be excluded as a contributing factor in the development of Vedic speculation regarding *tapas*. We have merely considered the issue here from a different point of view.

48. *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 4, 1, 35; 1, 7, 2, 9; 1, 8, 1, 29, etc.

49. See also ibid., 3, 1, 1, 9.

50. Ibid., 1, 1, 1, 4.

51. See Eggeling, part I, p. 4n.

52. Eggeling has noted in this regard that "the human body [i.e., the impure body] of the sacrificer is mystically consumed and a new divine body prepared" (ibid.).

53. Gonda, *Change*, p. 338.

54. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 1, 4, 23.

55. No doubt a major reason why the word *tapas* is able to convey the rather subjective and abstract meaning of ascetic heat-as well as being able to combine within that meaning connotations of destructive heat and painful heat-is found in the rather ambiguous connotations of the word in its earliest appearances. By way of contrast, the root *dah*, "to burn," has a very concrete meaning in the *Rg Veda*. It not only burns but "leaves a black trail" (Blair, p. 89). Its destructive effect can be objectively observed. Relatedly, in the *Rg Veda* the word *socis*, meaning flame and the light of a flame, is also quite concrete. As Blair observes, however, "the heating effect of $\sqrt{tap}$ is subjective and abstract. The burning effect of the root *dah* and the lighting effect of *socis* are clearly seen; but the heat of *tap* is felt only subjectively" (ibid.). Not only are the connotations of destructive heat often abstract and ambiguous, however; the connotations of undesirable pain found in the *Rg Veda* and the *Atharva Veda* are also frequently ambiguous and abstract. Sometimes the painful heat is in the body (e.g., *Rg Veda 1*, 105, 8); sometimes in the heart (e.g., *Atharva Veda* 16, 3, 6); and sometimes in the mind (e.g., *Atharva Veda* 19, 28, 2). Indeed, sometimes the modern reader cannot at all be certain what type of pain is involved.

56. See Griffith, *White Yajur Veda*, p. 40n. The ceremony is known as the *Tanunaptra*.

57. Cf. *Vajasaneyi Samhita 5*, 6: "O Agni, whatever form there is of thine, may that same form be here on me."

58. *Taittiriya Samhita 1*, 2, 1, (1).

59. *Satapatha Brahmana* 4, 5, 1, 6 and 9.

60. Ibid., 3, 1, 2, 1.

61. Ibid., 9, 5, 1, 2.

62. Ibid., 3, 4, 4, 27.

63. *Taittiriya Samhita* 7, 4, 9, 1.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., 7, 2, 10, 3-4.

66. Ibid., 5, 2, 9, 3; 6, 5, 6, 4.

67. This transition also takes place at other points in the ritual scenario.

68. There are, in fact, continual references in the Brahmanas to the fact that the human condition is necessary and

desirable.

69. *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 4, 4, 1.

70. Ibid., 10, 4, 4, 3.

71. Ibid., 10, 4, 4, 4.

72. *Maitri Upanisad* 4, 4 relatedly notes that man frees himself from *papman* through the practice of *tapas.*

73. See Eliade, *Yoga, p.* 111.

74. *Satapatha Brahmana* 8, 6, 3, 18.

75. Ibid., 4, 6, 8, 18.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid., 3, 4, 3, 1.

78. Ibid., 3, 4, 3, 2. Italics mine.

79. Ibid., 3, 4, 3, 9.

80. *Manu* 11, 44.

81. Ibid., 11, 54.

82. See also ibid., 11, 194; 11, 228; 11, 243; 12, 104.

83. One of the most prevalent words used to indicate purity in this legal literature is *suci*, which simultaneously means "flaming," again clearly suggesting a "transparency" to the fire. Unless otherwise indicated translations from *Visnu* are taken from J. Jolly, trans., *The Institutes of Vishnu*, Sacred Books of the East (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965).

84. *Satapatha Brahmana* 9, 5, 1, 6 and 9: "For *tapas* it is when one abstains from food."

85. Ibid., 9, 5, 1, 2: "For *tapas* it is when, after being initiated [at the *Diksa]*, one lives on fast-milk." See also ibid. 3, 2, 2, 7-19.

86. Ibid., 3, 4, 4, 26.

87. Ibid., 3, 4, 4, 27.

88. *Taittiriya Samhita* 7, 4, 9, 1.

89. See, for example, *Gautama Dharma Sutra* 19, *1 5; Baudhayana Dharma Sastra* 3, 10, 13.

90. See, for example, *Visnu* 47, 1-3.

91. *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* 23, 47.

92. *Visnu* 50, 30.

93. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 1, 9, 27, 3.

94. See, for example, *Manu* 11, 215.

95. *Taittiriya Samhita 5*, 2, 9, 3; 6, 5, 6, 4.

96. See, for example, Jolly's translation of *Visnu* 46, 19.

97. Monier-Williams, p. 801.

98. See, for example, Jolly's translation of *Visnu* 46, 21.

99. See in this context Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 337.

100. See, for example, *Jaiminiya Brahmana* 3, 3, 1; *Kausitaki Brahmana* 23, 5.

101. *Manu* 2, 83; 6, 70; *Visnu* 55, 17.

102. *Manu* 11, 142.

103. *tasmat tapyamanasyo'snatarah prano bhavati*

104. *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 34.

105. See, for example, *Taittiriya Aranyaka* 2, 14, 3.

106. See Eggeling, part V, p. 100n.

107. *Visnu* 50, 47; 55, 4-5; 56.

108. *Vasistha Dharma Sastra* 26, 13.

109. In addition to fasting, *pranayama*, and *svadhyaya*, other ascetic restraints observed by the *diksita* are prescribed as a means of atonement. Of particular note is sexual abstinence or *brahmacarya* which was repeatedly regarded as a form of *tapas* in the ritual literature. The legal literature continues to regard sexual continence as a form of *tapas* and frequently prescribes it as a penance. Atonement for killing a Ksatriya, for example, requires continence for nine years (*Baudhayana Dharma Sastra* 2, 1, 1, 8), and committing adultery requires one to remain chaste for two years as a penance (*Gautama Dharma Sutra* 22, 29).

110. *Manu* 11,236.

Chapter Four

1. Oldenberg, *Religion*, p. 404.

2. Oldenberg, *Weltanschauung*, pp. 147-49. Translation mine.

3. Hauer, p. 114.

4. R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education* (London: Macmillan, 1947), p. 46.

5. See ibid., pp. 34-35; also W. D. O'Flaherty, trans., *The Rig Veda* (New York: Penguine Books, 1981), p. 34n 2.

6. *Manu* 11, 244. Emphasis mine.

7. In his "act" of creation, Prajapati unites exertion (√*śram*), *tapas*, and thought. See Knipe, p. 116.

8. *Gopatha Brahmana* 1, 1, 1-15.

9. See also *Taittiriya Brahmana* 2, 1, 2, 1, where Prajapati sweats through *tapas*. See Knipe, p. 122.

10. *Rg Veda* 10, 154, *5*.

11. Ibid., 10, 109, 4; *Atharva Veda* 19, 41, 1.

12. Mookerji, p. 46.

13. *Viraj* may also be rendered as cosmic "majesty."

14. Appropriately, *Atharva Veda* 12, 1, 39 refers to the rsis as "primal makers of creation."

15. *Taittiriya Samhita* 3, 3, 5, 2.

16. See Knipe, p. 129, particularly his presentation of van Buitenen's translation.

17. Italics mine.

18. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 2, 9, 23, 7.

19. See Knipe, p. 94.

20. Ibid.

21. Translation by Blair, p. 73.

22. Hauer, pp. 104, 112, 114. See also Blair, p. 114.

23. Translation by Blair.

24. Blair, p. 113.

25. Gonda, *Change*, pp. 294, 296.

26. *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 6, 8.

27. Ibid., 2, 1, 28.

28. E.g., *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 21, 2.

29. Translation by Blair.

30. *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 3, 1; *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 20, 6; *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 5, 4, 2.

31. Translation by Hume.

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32. Translation by Hume.

33. *Hiranyakesi Grhya Sutra* 1, 2, 7, 2.

34. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 5, 4, 5. See also *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 10, 4; *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 21, 2-4.

35. Gonda, *Change*, p. 295.

36. Verse 4.

37. Oldenberg, *Religion*, p. 467n.

38. *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 2, 7.

39. Ibid., 4, 5, 15.

40. Just as it is used interchangeably with the term *tapas*. See, for example, *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 22, 1-5. See also Oldenberg, *Ghrya Sutras,* part I, p. 8; part II, p. 69n.

41. *Atharva Veda* 10, 7, 11.

42. *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 3, 2, 17.

43. *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 11, 10-11.

44. *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 22, 19-20.

45. Note the subtle but important difference between Gopal and Gonda on this issue: R. Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasutras* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1959), p. 307; Gonda, *Change,* p. 329.

46. *Manu* 2, 164-165. Emphasis mine. Like the *brahmacarin,* the *grhastha* (i.e., "householder" of the second life-stage) also prepares himself for *svadhyaya* (i.e., study or recitation of the Veda) through various *tapas-oriented* activities. Contrary to his normal domestic behavior, he remains chaste *(Gautama Dharma Sutra* 16, 3).

47. E.g., *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 11, 10-12; Gopal, p. 308.

48. *Atharva Veda* 19, 41, 1.

49. 1, 23, 1-26. See also Gopal, p. 307.

50. Chapter 1.

51. See van Buitenen, p. 41; *Satapatha Brahmana* 14, 1, 1, 33.

52. *Bharadvaja Srauta Sutra* 11, 21-22.

53. Van Buitenen, p. 1.

54. Ibid., p. 7.

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55. 1, 23, 21.

56. See Gopal, p. 307; Gonda, *Change,* p. 333.

57. See Keith, *Black Yajus,* p. cxxiv.

58. E.g., *Manava Grhya Sutra 1*, 23, 14ff. prescribes the *Asvamedha Diksa,* which lasts *twelve* nights, and enables one to understand the mystery of the Horse Sacrifice. Relatedly, study of the *Agnicayana* (*Manava Grhya Sutra 1*, 21, 13; 1, 23, 5ff.) is begun with the *Agniki-diksa,* which is also termed a *vrata.*

Chapter Five

1. The etymological relation between *veda* and *vidya* (i.e., knowledge) is evident.

2. Relatedly, the later *karma-marga and jñana-marga,* although explicitly differentiated, are often difficult to separate in practice.

3. The term *samsara* is first used in *Katha Upanisad* 3, 7. The idea, however, is at least as old as *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 4, 4, 4, 5. (F. Edgerton, *The Beginnings of Indian Philosophy* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965], p. 30n).

4. The term *persona*, was, I believe, popularized in this context by H. Zimmer. See, in particular, his *Philosophies of India* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956).

5. The articulation of the Atman/Brahman identity in the *Brhadaranyaka* and *Chandogya* is a major leitmotif of the principal Upanisads. It would be false, however, to suggest that it is the only theme. A new and powerful theism, for example, emerges in the *Isa* and *Svetasvatara Upanisads.* Such theism precludes the radical monism of Uddalaka. Although a distinction may exist between Lord and man, none can exist between Atman and Brahman. This emergent theism of the later Veda expands to become the full-blown worship of Visnu and Siva in Hinduism. Relatedly, a third focus, namely *bhakti,* or loving devotion, takes its place along with *karma* and *jñana.* Loving devotion, just as action and knowledge, will become the center of its own path to salvation, the *bhakti-marga.* The flowering of theism and *bhakti*, however, lies beyond the Vedic period and, therefore, beyond the range of present consideration.

6. Strictly speaking, as the "One," Brahman is without personality and gender. Brahman in this regard is the cosmic "It," clearly neuter. Under the impact of either a fading or emerging theism, however, Brahman is frequently granted personality and masculinity. Masculine and neuter designations are often intermingled in the same text. This ambiguity is recognized in certain Upanisads which attempt to clarify the issue by distinguishing between two forms of Brahman: the formed and the formless (e.g., *Maitri* 6, 3). Relatedly, a distinction may be drawn between Saguna Brahman or "Brahman with attributes" and Nirguna Brahman or "Brahman without attributes." The manifest, conditioned, formed Saguna Brahman is a personal god; the unmanifest,

unconditioned, formless Nirguna Brahman is the impersonal ground of reality. Saguna Brahman, Lord of the Universe, "Cosmic He" may be loved, worshiped, and known. Nirguna Brahman, however, by its very nature is not worshiped and cannot be known in any traditional fashion. From a higher perspective, however, Nirguna and Saguna Brahman are one. This assertion, however, returns us again to that perspective which devalues plurality, perceiving it to be a product of ignorance, and therefore somehow less than real. In this conviction that multiplicity is somehow less than real lies the genesis of the later doctrine of *maya.* That issue, however, lies beyond the scope of our discussion.

7. Explicit use of the terms *kama, artha,* and *dharma* to designate the three lifevalues supplemented by *moksa* is not evident until the Dharma Sastras.

8. It is, indeed, as celebration that van der Leeuw understood all asceticism. See G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 455-457. See also Knipe, p. 132.

Chapter Six

1. A. B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads, 2* vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 515.

2. *Maitri Upanisad* 4, 3. Translation by Hume.

3. See, for example, the cosmogonic paradigm of *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 1,* 5, 1-2.

4. See, for example, ibid. 2, 3, 1, which states: "There are, assuredly, two forms of Brahma(n): the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the stationary and the moving, the actual and the yon." Translation by Hume. See also *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 3.

5. See particularly chapter 2 above.

6. See the commentary of Nikhilananda, *The Upanisads*, 4 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1949-59), vol. 3, p. 174.

7. See, for example, *Chandogya Upanisad* 2, 23, 1.

8. Nikhilananda, vol. 3, pp. 303-04.

9. See also Nikhilananda (vol. 3, p. 142), who equates *karma* in this context with sacrifice.

10. Hume's translation.

11. See Nikhilananda's translation.

12. Translation by S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanisads* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953). Italics mine.

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13. Ibid., p. 674. *yah sarvajnah sarva-vid yasya jñanamayam tapah*

14. Radhakrishnan's translation.

15. Hume's translation.

16. Hume's translation.

17. Radhakrishnan's translation. Italics mine.

18. 1, 2, 9-10. Hume's translation.

19. Hume's translation. Italics mine.

20. Hume's translation. Italics mine.

21. Translation based on Hume.

22. See chapter 2 above.

23. Translation by Eggeling.

24. Hume's translation.

25. Nikhilananda, vol. 4, p. 180.

26. Hume's translation.

27. Radhakrishnan's translation.

28. At *Maitri Upanisad* 2, 6 the Creator created simply by meditating upon himself *(atmanam).* See also *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 1, 4, 17.

29. The use of the root *ci* in this context is interesting. In the Brahmanas this root was invariably used in association with the "building," "piling," or "extending" of the fire altar. The name of the rite itself, the *Agnicayana* $(\sqrt{ci})$, makes this evident. Just as the sacrificial altar and hence Prajapati himself as Primal One "expanded" $(\sqrt{ci})$through ascetic effort ($\sqrt{tap}$) so here Brahman, as Primal One, expands or increases $(\sqrt{ci})$ through the same power. In the "extension" of the Agni-Prajapati altar it is toil *(*$\sqrt{śram}$*)* and ascetic effort which is critical. Here, however, it is rather meditative or contemplative power *(tapas)* which serves as agent.

30. Radhakrishnan, p. 673.

31. Radhakrishnan's translation.

32. See the Radhakrishnan translation.

33. Hume's translation.

34. *visvarupam harinam jatavedasam parayanam jyotir ekam tapantam*

35. Radhakrishnan's translation. *tam hovaca, tapasa brahma vijijñasava, tapo brahmeti, sa tapo' tapyata, sa tapas taptva mano brahmeti vyajanat*

36. Radhakrishnan's translation. Italics mine.

37. See Radhakrishnan's translation.

38. Hume's translation.

39. *evam atmatmani grhyate'sau satyenainam tapasa yo'nupasyati*

40. A thoroughgoing monism is, of course, not evident in all Upanisads or Upanisadic passages.

41. Hume's translation.

42. Hume's translation.

43. *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 18. Hume's translation.

44. Translation by Edgerton, *Beginnings,* p. 52.

45. In a fashion similar to *Rg Veda* 10, 90, the components of the personified Skambha are identified or homologized with components of the universe: his eyes with the sun and moon; his mouth with the fire; his breath with the wind (10, 7, 33 and 34).

46. Verse 44 reads as would an Upanisadic passage: "Desireless, wise, immortal, self-existent, satisfied with enjoyment, not deficient in any respect-he fears not death who knows this same Self (Atman) . . . (Edgerton, *Beginnings,* p. 103).

47. Numerous Upanisadic passages clearly and explicitly suggest that the perceived world of multiplicity is "less than real." The doctrine of *maya* is, however, as noted, fully developed only in post-Vedic India.

48. The term *manual* is perhaps inappropriate here, as would be the word *text.* Frits Staal rightly reminds us: "We are not dealing with books that were written down, but with orally transmitted compositions" (F. Staal, *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar,* 2 vols. [Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983] p. 29).

49. The paradigm for such mental performance of the ritual is found already at *Taittiriya Samhita* 1, 6, 8, where Prajapati himself performs the sacrifice in his mind alone. It is clearly in the Brahmanas that many sacrifices are regarded as meditative exercises alone. They are no longer performed in the conventional, external fashion. See Renou, p. 30.

50. *Atharva Veda* 10, 7, 44, in fact, states: "The chants were made the shuttles for weaving." See Edgerton, *Beginnings,* p. 97.

51. My translation.

> sa yad asisisati yat pipasati, yan na ramate, ta asya diksah.
> atha yad asnati, yat pibati, yad ramate, tad upasadair eti.
> atha yadd hasati yaj jaksati, yan maithunam carati, stutasastrair eva tad eti.
> atha yat tapo danam arjavam ahimsa satya-vacanam iti, ta asya daksinah.

> *tasmad ahuh sosyaty asosteti punar utpadanam evasya, tan maranam evavabhrthah.*

52. 2, 11, 1. Hume's translation.

53. 2, 19, 1. Hume's translation.

54. 2, 12, 1. Hume's translation.

55. 2, 2, 1. Hume's translation.

56. 2, 5, 1. Hume's translation.

57. Hume's translation.

58. *Taittiriya Upanisad* 1, 7. Hume's translation.

59. Ibid., 3, 10, 6. Hume's translation.

60. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 4, 4, 13. Hume's translation.

61. See *Pañcavimsa Brahmana* 10. See also Knipe's comments, pp. 40, 44.

Chapter Seven

1. O'Flaherty, *Women, p.* 10.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

4. M. Biardeau and C. Malamoud, *Le Sacrifice dans l'lnde ancienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976).

5. J. C. Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 81.

6. Biardeau, p. 64.

7. Ibid., pp. 66-68.

8. Ibid., p. 64.

9. Ibid., p. 72.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., pp. 56, 71.

12. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

13. Ibid., p. 72.

14. Ibid., p. 73.

15. Heesterman, *Conflict*, p. 82.

16. W. O'Flaherty, "The Origin of Heresy in Hindu Mythology," *History of Religions* 10 (1971): 279.

17. Biardeau, p. 65.

18. See chapter 6, n.48.

19. Smith, p. 306. See also F. Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual," *Numen* 26 (1979) and F. Staal, "Ritual Syntax," in *Sanskrit and Indian Studies*, ed. by M. Nagatomi, et al. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979).

20. See especially "The Meaninglessness of Ritual."

21. Staal, *Agni*, p. 19.

22. Ibid., p. 60.

23. Consider, for example, H. Penner, "Language, Ritual and Meaning," *Numen* 32 (1985).

24. Staal, *Agni*, p. 60; "Meaninglessness," p. 3.

25. Staal, *Agni*, p. 60.

26. Ibid., p. 16.

27. Staal, "Meaninglessness," p. 3.

28. Ibid., p. 11.

29. Ibid., p. 4.

30. Ibid., p. 11.

31. Staal, *Agni*, pp. 20, 60, 61.

32. Ibid., p. 62.

33. Ibid., p. 11. This approach appears problematic, for as Alf Hiltebeitel again reminds us, "ritual exegesis" should not be separated from "mythic exegesis" (A. Hiltebeitel, *The Ritual of Battle: Krishna in the Mahabharata* [Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1976], pp. 358-360).

34. Staal, *Agni*, p. 60. Emphasis mine.

35. Heesterman, *Conflict*, p. 9.

36. Ibid., p. 20.

37. Ibid., pp. 3, 5, 102.

38. See, for example, ibid., pp. 33, 45, 103.

39. Ibid., p. 91.

40. Ibid., p. 26.

41. Ibid., p. 3.

42. Ibid., p. 26.

43. Ibid., pp. 3, 82, 188.

44. See, for example, ibid., pp. 26-35, 50, 68, 86, 87; see also J. C. Heesterman, "Other Folk's Fire," in *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*, ed. by F. Staal, vol. 2; J. C. Heesterman, "Vedism and Brahmanism," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by M. Eliade, et al. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), where the same theme is developed.

45. Heesterman, *Conflict*, p. 91.

46. Heesterman, "Vedism and Brahmanism," p. 234.

47. Heesterman, *Conflict*, pp. 32, 50.

48. Ibid., pp. 33, 91.

49. Ibid., pp. 4, 101.

50. Ibid., pp. 4, 34.

51. Ibid., p. 45.

52. Ibid., pp. 5, 9.

53. Ibid., p. 3.

54. Ibid., pp. 39, 41, 93.

55. Ibid., pp. 38-44.

56. Ibid., p. 39.

57. Heesterman, "Vedism and Brahmanism," p. 238.

58. Ibid., p. 43.

59. Heesterman, *Conflict*, pp. 39-40. Emphasis mine.

60. Heesterman, "Vedism and Brahmanism," p. 236.

61. See chapter 1 above, n.18.

62. See especially Olivelle, "Renouncer," pp. 83-97, 106.

63. P. Olivelle, "Samnyasa," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 13, ed. by M. Eliade, et al. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 51: "Renunciation . . .questioned the value of major Brahmanic institutions such as marriage, sacrificial rites, and the social hierarchy of castes. Because it proclaimed the path of renunciation, divorced from ritual and society, as the acme of religious life, the way of

renunciation posed a special challenge to the society-centered Vedic religion, which recognized only one socioreligious role for adult men, that of the married householder with his social, procreative, and ritual obligations. The Brahmanic tradition, however, has always demonstrated the ability to absorb the new without discarding the old. Attempts were made to find theoretical legitimations for the lifestyles of both the renouncer and the householder, the most significant of which was the system of the four as*ramas."*

64. L. Dumont, "World Renunciation in Indian Religions," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 4 (1960).

65. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

66. Ibid., p. 47.

67. Ibid., p. 62.

68. Ibid., pp. 47, 62.

69. Ibid., p. 46.

70. Ibid., p. 52.

71. Ibid., p. 44.

72. Ibid., p. 52.

73. Ibid., p. 41.

74. Ibid., p. 45.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., p. 41.

77. Ibid., p. 48.

78. Ibid., p. 37.

79. Ibid., p. 49.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid., p. 51.

82. Ibid., p. 46.

83. Ibid., p. 47.

84. Ibid., p. 47n.

85. See Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 108. Although sacrifice and asceticism are in many ways *conceptually* distinct, there is "no solution of continuity," as Eliade observes, "between ritual on the one hand and ascetic and contemplative techniques on the other-the difference between the sacrificer and the *tapasvin* was, in the beginning, a difference of degree."

86. Ibid., p. 109.

87. Ibid., p. 113.

88. Ibid., pp. 111-112.

89. Particular reference should be made here to the work of S. Lévi as well as Hubert and Mauss.

90. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 109. As is evident from Eliade's discussion, the Upanisads are sometimes as significant in this context as are the Brahmanas.

91. See Olivelle, "Renouncer," pp. 81-82 for a discussion of these terms.

92. Ibid., pp. 81f; see especially p. 101.

93. In the later legal literature such as *Manu* and *Visnu* one is obligated to pass through these four stages in the correct order. In the earlier Sutras this strict progression is not always required. As Olivelle has painstakingly demonstrated, *Manu* does not use the term *sannyasin* to characterize his "world renouncer" of stage four. *Manu* terms him rather *yati* or *parivrajaka*. *Manu* uses the term *sannyasin* in a unique fashion, indicating someone who attains liberation while still living in society (P. Olivelle, "Contributions to the Semantic History of *Samnyasa," Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 [1981]: 270-71). The *sannyasin*, as *Manu* uses the term, neither leaves his home nor does he wander. The *sannyasin* is, for *Manu*, in a state of "retirement" (ibid., p. 271).

94. See particularly *Atharva Veda* 11, 5.

95. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, *5*, 4, 1-18.

96. See, e.g., Oldenberg, *Religion*, pp. 466-71; Gonda, *Change*, p. 233.

97. Eliade, *Initiation*, p. 53.

98. Oldenberg, *Religion*, pp. 469-70; J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960-64), vol.1, p. 119.

99. See, for example, Oldenberg, *Religion*, pp. 410-30.

100. See for example, *Paraskara Grhya Sutra* 2, 5, 13; *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 1, 1, 2, 16. According to numerous texts one must observe chastity for as many as forty-eight years, twelve years for the learning of each Veda.

101. See, for example, Gonda, *Change*, p. 233.

102. See also in this context Basham, p. 162.

103. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 107.

104. This has already been observed by Oldenberg, *Weltanschauung*, p. 148.

105. Gonda has observed: "In view of the Indian tendency to identify concepts

which are closely related or show some similarity, it is not surprising to encounter texts in which *tapas* and brahmacarya are looked on as identical" (Change, p. 295).

106. Specifically, the Kausika school.

107. V. M. Apte, *Religious and Social Life in the Grihya Sutras* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1939), p. 311.

108. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 58.

109. *Manu* 2, 83; 2, 167; *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 1, 4, 12, 1. See also chapter 3 above.

110. A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 11.

111. See, for example, Oldenberg, *Religion*, pp. 403, 407, 409, 424-28.

112. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy*, p. 303. The similarity of student and sacrificer is also suggested by the fact that already at *Atharva Veda* 11, 5, 6 the *brahmacarin* is called a *diksita*.

113. See Monier-Williams, p. 1138.

114. *Baudhayana Dharma Sutra* 1, 2, 4, 6. See also *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 3, 3, 2.

115. *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 2, 3. See also P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, 5 vols. (Poona: Bhandarkar, 1941), vol. 2, p. 289.

116. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 1, 4, 12, 1.

117. *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 3, 3, 2.

118. Eliade, *Yoga*, p. 113.

119. Gonda, *Change*, p. 235.

120. Kane, vol. 2, p. 270.

121. *brahmacari carati vevisad visah sa devanam bhavaty ekam angam*

122. See *Chandogya Upanisad* 8, 15.

123. O'Flaherty, "Heresy," p. 279.

124. Translation by Kane, vol. 2, p. 420.

125. O'Flaherty, "Heresy," p. 280.

126. Olivelle, "Rites of Passage: Hindu Rites," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12, p. 390; Olivelle, "Renouncer," p. 99.

127. Olivelle, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12, p. 390.

128. *Chandogya Upanisad* 2, 23, 1.

129. Deussen, p. 372.

130. 95, 1.

131. 6, 23. Examples could easily be multiplied. See also *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 2, 9, 23, 1; *Gautama Dharma Sutra* 3, 26. In the post-Vedic *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra*, where four types of *vanaprasthas* are differentiated, each is still described as devoted to *tapas*.

132. *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 10.

133. See, for example, *Paraskara Grhya Sutra* 2, 4, 3 and 2, 4, 8.

134. Bloomfield in fact felt that *Atharva Veda 11*, 5 was a glorification of the sun personified as a brahmacarin.

135. See especially *Khadia Grhya Sutra* 2, 5, 20; *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 6, 5, 13; Oldenberg, *Religion*, p. 422.

136. *Manu* 6, 23. At *Maitri Upanisad* 1, 2, King Brhadratha enters the third stage in the forest and performs asceticism by continually gazing at the sun.

137. See, for example, *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 9, 1; 2, 12, 6.

138. T. W. Organ, *The Hindu Quest for the Perfection of Man* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1970), p. 232.

139. See, for example, *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 6, 4; *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 22, 4; *Pdraskara Grhya Sutra* 2, 5, 1.

140. *Manu* 6, 27; *Gautama Dharma Sutra* 3, 14.

141. *Manu* 6, 6; *Visnu* 94, 9.

142. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 2, 9, 22, 2-3; *Manu* 6, 20.

143. *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra* 8, 7; Gopal, p. 324.

144. See, for example, *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 22, 19; *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 2, 10, 43; Gopal, p. 298.

145. See, for example, *Manu* 6, 26; *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra* 7, 7.

146. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 2, 9, 21, 21; *Manu* 6, 8.

147. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 2, 9, 21, 19; *Visnu* 94, 7.

148. Gonda, *Change*, p. 381.

149. Translation by W. Caland, *Vaikhdnasasmartasutram* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1929), pp. 198-99. Italics mine.

150. Gonda, *Change*, p. 231.

151. Compare, for example, *Manu* 6, 25-29 with *Manu* 6, 38; 6, 43; 6, 44; and *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 2, 921, 20-21 with 2, 9; 2, 21; 2, 10 of the same Sutra.

152. *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra* 10, 5; Kane, vol. 2, p. 420.

153. *Visnu* 96, 24; *Manu* 6, 70.

154. *Baudhayana Dharma Sutra* 2, 10, 18, 2.

155. *Vasistha Dharma Sutra* 10, 7.

156. *Baudhayana Dharma Sutra* 2, 10, 17, 12.

157. See, for example, *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra* 8, 9a.

158. Olivelle, "Renouncer," p. 138.

159. Gonda, *Change*, p. 235.

160. Ibid., p. 291.

161. This Upanisad, like many others which follow the "principal thirteen," reflects more the synthesizing efforts of orthodoxy than the spirit of the earlier *jñanakanda.*

162. See K. Narayanasvami's translation of *Thirty Minor Upanishads* (Madras, 1914), p. 212.

163. *Chandogya Upanisad* 2, 23, 1; 5, 10, 1-3. See also H. Chakraborti, *Asceticism in Ancient India, in Brahmanical, Buddhist, Jaina and Ajivika Societies* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1973), p. 63.

164. Particularly the so-called Sannyasa Upanisads.

165. See, for example, H. D. Sharma, *Contributions to the History of Brahmanical Asceticism* (Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1939), pp. 34-35.

166. Olivelle, "Contributions," pp. 265, 273.

167. Ibid., pp. 268, 273. See also Olivelle, "Renouncer," p. 131.

168. Olivelle, "Contributions," p. 272.

169. See, for example, *Asrama Upanisad* 1-4; *Paramahamsa Upanisad* 4.

170. Sharma, p. 35.

171. Ibid., p. 49.

172. Chakraborti, pp. 60f. See also Olivelle, "Renouncer," p. 116.

173. Olivelle, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 13, p. 52.

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174. One of the most common classifications is four-fold: *kuticaka, bahudaka, hamsa, and paramahamsa.* For a detailed discussion of the various types of renouncers see Olivelle, "Renouncer," pp. 136f.

175. For example, *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 4, 4, 22.

176. Olivelle, "Renouncer," p. 106.

177. the *Naradaparivrajaka Upanisad* and *Brhatsannyasa Upanisad* for example, give great detail on ritual behavior appropriate to the smallest details of the *sannyasin's* life.

It is both clear and significant that many of the later Upanisads are orthodox in character, attempting to effect a synthesis between conventional and more innovative points of view.

178. *Manu* 5, 108; 6, 85 and 96; *Visnu* 22, 91; *Yajñavalkya* 3, 32.

179. Sharma, p. 34.

180. *Vaikhdnasasmarta Sutra* 2, 5.

181. See, for example, ibid., 2, 4; Sharma, p. 50; Kane, vol. 2, p. 960.

182. *Baudhayana Dharma Sutra 2*, 10, 17, 10.

183. Kane, vol. 2, p. 961.

184. *Baudhlyana Dharma Sutra* 2, 10, 18, 3.

185. Ibid., 2, 10, 18, 2.

186. *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra* 8, 2; Gopal, pp. 298, 324.

187. Olivelle, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12, p. 389.

188. Many psychological attitudes required of the *sannyasin,* such as avoiding attachment, anger, envy, elation, etc., had long been required of the *brahmacarin* (Gopal, p. 324).

189. Kane, vol. 2, p. 375.

190. See also *Chandogya Upanisad* 2, 23.

191. See, in this context, Gonda, *Change,* p. 302.

192. Caland, p. 186.

193. See, for example, *Manu* 6, 35-36; 6, 65; 6, 74.

194. Ibid., 6, 75.

195. Despite the similarities between the initiations of the *brahmacarin* and that of the *sannyasin*, it must be realized that the initiation into the fourth *asrama* is, generally speaking, not obligatory, as is the initiation of the *brahmacarin.*

196. *Manu*, 2, 229.

197. Ibid., 2, 228.

198. Ibid., 2, 234.

199. Ibid., 2, 166.

200. Ibid., 2, 188.

201. Ibid., 2, 57.

202. In the later *Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra,* for example, all types of *vanaprasthas* are "devoted to *tapas"* (8, 7) but not the student. At no time does the word *tapas* appear in the description of the duties of the later *brahmacarin. Vratas* are mentioned but the specific austerities are never indicated. In fact, all that is really presented are the accompanying mantras.

203. It has been argued that Buddhist and Jain ascetics contributed to the practices evidenced in the third and fourth as*ramas.* The opposite point of view, namely, that the Buddhist and Jain ascetics borrowed many of their practices from the Hindu *vanaprastha* and *sannydsin,* has also been advanced. However, this dispute is in certain ways misleading. The

issue, it appears, is that ascetics and ascetic life-styles existed; somehow these ascetic life-styles and their practitioners were organized, structured, and even regulated. The Brahmanic solution to the issue of an ascetic lifestyle was the as*rama* system. The important issue, then, is where in the orthodox fold could one find a legitimizing model to justify assimilation. Ascetics *outside* the Brahmanic mainstream could hardly function in this capacity. The evidently different weltanschauungs of the Buddhists (e.g., denial of Atman and Brahman) and of the Jains (e.g., dualism *of jiva* and *ajiva)* clearly prevent these ascetics from serving effectively as a validating model.

Chapter Eight

1. See in particular chapter 2 above.

2. Eliade, *Initiation,* p. xiv.

3. Ibid., p. 52.

4. J. S. Helfer, "The Initiatory Structure of the *Kathopanisad," History of Religions* 7 (1968). See especially p. 365.

5. Lommel, pp. 121-124; Hauer, pp. 87-88.

6. Lommel, pp. 121-124.

7. Even Lommel at one point is obligated to admit that the embryonic condition is itself a state of death, but he leaves this crucial point completely undeveloped.

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8. Eliade, *Initiation,* pp. xiv, 51. Emphasis mine.

9. See in particular chapter 2 above.

10. Translation by Bloomfield, p. 215. Italics mine.

11. See especially *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 5, 4, 16.

12. Lommel, p. 126. See also *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, *5,* 4, 6.

13. Helfer, pp. 351, 354, 355, 359.

14. *Katha Upanisad* 1, 11.

15. Hauer, p. 95.

16. Heesterman, *Royal Consecration,* p. 127.

17. *Satapatha Brahmana* 10, 4, 3, 1.

18. Whitney's translation.

19. *Aitareya Brahmana* 1, 3, 1.

20. Cited and translated by Gonda, *Change,* p. 337.

21. ". . . Verily thus they cover him with a caul. Above that is the black antelope skin; the placenta is above the caul; verily thus they cover him with the placenta" *(Aitareya Brahmana* 1, 3, 1).

22. *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana* 3, 11, 3. Italics mine.

23. "Embryos live in the womb, without taking food" *(Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 3, 1,4).

24. Hubert and Mauss, p. 21.

25. Eliade, *Initiation*, pp. 14, 15, 16, 31, 33, 107.

26. See Keith, *Black Yajus,* p. cxxvi. See also Biardeau, p. 20.

27. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 2, 1, I notes: "And when he performs offering he is born a second time."

28. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 2, 1, 40; *Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana* 3, 14, 8 notes: "Unborn is man in so far as he does not sacrifice."

29. Keith notes, citing Oldenberg: "If the victim is not to be eaten, it is because its flesh is not really animal, but human (i.e., that of the sacrificer)" *(Black Yajus, p.* cxiv).

30. Heesterman, *Royal Consecration,* p. 6.

31. *Satapatha Brahmana* 6, 2, 2, 7; 7, 2, 1, 5.

32. Hubert and Mauss, p. 60.

33. *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 2, 3, 6.

34. Biardeau, p. 56.

35. Eggeling, part I, p. 49n.; part II, p. 25n.

36. *Satapatha Brahmana* 4, 2, 5, 12; 12, 6, 1, 6; See also Eggeling, part II, p. 248n.

37. Italics mine. See also *Satapatha Brahmana* 2, 2, 2, 6; 3, 3, 2, 6.

38. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 9, 4, 23.

39. Ibid., 3, 1, 1, 8.

40. Italics mine.

41. *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 1, 1, 5. Italics mine.

42. *Tandya-Maha Brahmana* 9, 4, 16: *dusprapa iva vai parah pantha* S. Lévi, *La Doctrine du Sacrifice dans les Brahmanas* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1899), p. 96.

43. Ibid.

44. Cited and translated by Brian Smith, p. 296.

45. Gonda, *Change,* p. 367. Italics mine.

46. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 2, 1, 32.

47. Ibid., 3, 2, 1, 35.

48. Ibid., 3, 1, 3, 13.

49. *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 6, 3, 1.

50. Ibid., 3, 1, 1, 3.

51. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 2, 1, 31. Italics mine.

52. Hubert and Mauss, p. 28. Italics mine.

53. Ibid., pp. 122n; 152. Italics mine.

54. *Lévi*, p. 124.

55. Smith, p. 295.

56. *Satapatha Brahmana* 7, 1, 1, 40. Translation based on Lévi.

57. Ibid., 3, 1, 1, 2. Italics mine. Translation based on Lévi.

58. Lévi, p. 126.

59. *Satapatha Brahmana* 11, 7, 3, 2. Translation based on Lévi.

60. *Taittiriya Samhita* 6, 2, 5, 5. For other examples of danger at the ritual, see ibid. 5, 2, 8, 7; 5, 4, 10, 3; 5, 6, 6, 1; 5, 6, 9, 1; 6, 1,5, 5.

61. Hubert and Mauss, p. 32. Italics mine.

62. Smith, p. 296.

63. *Satapatha Brahmana* 3, 2, 1, 6.

64. Ibid., 3, 1, 1, 1. Italics mine.

65. Eliade, *Patterns*, pp. 102-108.

66. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 1, 3, 28.

67. *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 1, 2, 17; 1, 1, 1, 4.

68. Ibid., 3, 1, 3, 18.

69. *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 2, 10, 38.

70. *Paraskara Grhya Sutra* 2, 2, 7.

71. *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 2, 10, 34; *Paraskara Grhya Sutra* 2, 4, 1; *Asvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 21, 2.

72. *Gobhila Grhya Sutra* 3, 1, 17; *Khadia Grhya Sutra* 2, 5, 10-12.

73. See, for example, *Hiranyakesi Grhya Sutra* 1, 1, 4, 4.

74. See, for example, *Sankhayana Grhya Sutra* 2, 1-10.

75. *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* 1, 1, 1, 15; *Gautama Dharma Sutra* 1,8; *Manu* 2, 68; 6, 1; *Visnu* 28, 37.

76. See, for example, *Manu* 2, 68; 6, 94; *Visnu* 28, 39.

77. Kane, vol. 2, p. 954.

78. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 6, 2; *Chandogya Upanisad* 4, 4; 4, 10; 6, 1; 8, 7. *Kausitaki Upanisad* 4, 19.

79. See Gonda, *Change*, pp. 377-91.

80. See, for example, *Chandogya Upanisad* 5, 2, 4.

81. Gonda, *Change*, pp. 315-462; see especially pp. 315, 337.

82. This is well illustrated by the *Diksa* in Saivism where the initiate yogi is regarded only as the *adopted* son of his

teacher (Gonda, *Change*, p. 435), thereby avoiding the more striking imagery.

83. The observations of both Biardeau and Hiltebeitel are of great interest in this context. (See in particular A. Hiltebeitel, "Siva, the Goddess, and the Disguises of the Pandavas and Draupadi," *History of Religions* 20 [1980].) Both authors draw attention

to the *Mahabharata* passages in which Draupadi and the Pandavas are "reborn in the 'womb' of Matsya, the Fish" (Hiltebeitel, "Siva," pp. 149, 161, 171, 174). Interestingly enough, as Hiltebeitel's observations suggest, this womb/rebirth experience is not without its negative dimension. The rebirth is a "painful" one (Hiltebeitel, "Siva," p. 161) and the transformation not always felicitous (ibid., p. 171).

That womb and embryo imagery exist in the much later tradition is evidenced by the *Hiranyagarbha* ritual (i.e., the ritual of the "golden embryo") (see T. Zachariae, "Scheingeburt," in *Zeitschrift der Vereinsfur Volkskunde* 20 [1910]: 141 ff.; also in his *Kleine Schriften* [Bonn and Leipzig, 1920]: 266 ff.; also Eliade, *Initiation*, pp. 5657). During this initiation, "the person undergoing the rite is placed in a golden receptacle in the shape of a cow, upon emerging from which he is regarded as an infant and is put through the rites of birth." As Eliade notes, "A gold reproduction of the womb (*yoni*)is commonly used." The person undergoing the rite is "transformed into a golden embryo" (*Initiation*, p. 56). The presence of this ritual and its symbolism, however, does little to refute our argument. As Eliade indicates, and as all evidence suggests, the rite was of "probable pre-Aryan [i.e., non-Brahmanic] origin." Although mentioned in *Atharva Veda Parisista* 13, most references to the rite were made during the nineteenth century by foreign observers (Zachariae, *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 266-76). Eliade notes that during the Vedic period it was probably not practiced in priestly circles (*Initiation*, p. 56). Its non-Aryan origin is also suggested by the fact that the rite was practiced chiefly in southern India and Assam (Zachariae, *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 266-76).

84. Hume's translation.

85. *Katha Upanisad* 3, 7-8.

86. *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 17.

87. Italics mine.

88. Italics mine.

89. *tad ya iha ramaniya-caranah, abhyaso ha yat te ramaniyam yonim apadyeran, brahmana-yonim va ksatriya-yonim va, vaisya-yonim va; atha ya iha kapuya-caranah abhyaso ha yat te kapuydam* yonim apadyeran sva-yonim va sukarayonim va candalayonim vd.

90. *Manu* 12, 78.

91. *yonim anye prapadyante Sariratvaya dehinah*

92. *Manu* 2, 147-48. Italics mine.

93. *Visnu 30,* 45-46. Italics mine.

94. P. Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda* (Leipzig: F, A. Brockhaus, 1897), p. 605.

95. *Visnu* 96, 30.

96. *Sannyasa Upanisad* 2, 8. Italics mine.

97. Italics mine.

98. Italics mine.

99. *Mundaka Upanisad* 2, 2, 5.

100. *uttisthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata: ksurasya dhara nisita duratyaya; durgam pathas tat kavayo vadanti.*

101. *Manu* 4, 242; 1, 50. Italics mine.

102. *Visnu* 44, 14; 44, 16; 44, 24; 45, 4; 45, 28.

103. Ibid., 43, 32.

104. Ibid., 43, 33-38.

105. Ibid., 44, 1.

106. Ibid., 96, 30; 96, 33.

107. *Manu* 12, 78; 12, 56; 12, 70.

108. *Visnu* 96, 25. Italics mine.

109. *Manu* 6, 61; 6, *65;* 6, 63; 6, 79; 6, 82; see also *Visnu* 97, 5.

110. "He reaches the heavenly world who knows these thus as five Brahmamen, doorkeepers of the heavenly world."

111. *Chandogya Upanisad* 3, 12, 7-9; see also 8, 3, 3.

112. Ibid., 8, 1, 3.

113. Ibid., 8, 1, 5. Italics mine.

114. *Maitri Upanisad* 6, 28. Italics mine.

115. See also *Katha Upanisad* 6, 16.

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Index

A

adhvaryu priest, 22-25, 131, 133

Agni, 2, 6-8, 32, 94-95, 129, 143-45, 160n.110, 162n.1;

and *Agnicayana*, 36-38;

and funeral, 42-43;

and knowledge, 65-67 (*see also* fire, and knowledge);

as priest, 7-8;

and purification, 47-48, 52-53, 59;

and rainfall and fertility, 16-18, 21-28 (*see also* fire, and rainfall and fertility);

vs enemies, 45-47. *See also* fire

Agnicayana, 31, 36-38, 42, 53, 103, 172n.29. *See also* altar

Agnicit, 42

Agni Jatavedas, 65

Agni Pavamana, 48

Agni Vaisvanara, 16

Agni Visvadevas, 65

Agnyadheya, 62

ahamkara (egoism), 141

Ahavaniya fire, 34, 114, 132

ahimsa, 97, 103, 121

Aitareya Brahmana, 34, 93, 116, 128

Aitareya Upanisad, 39

alchemy, 5

alms, 85-87, 97, 114, 117, 122-23. *See also* begging

altar, 35-38, 40, 42, 44, 53, 100, 145. See also *Agnicayana*

androgyny. *See* unilateral creation

animal(s), 15, 41, 58, 139

antelope skin, 35, 47, 115-116, 118, 120-22

anti-ascetic tradition, 116

Antyesti, 41

Apastamba Dharma Sutra, 20, 59, 69, 114

Apastamba Srauta Sutra, 34-35, 53, 128

aranyaka, 69

Aranyakas, 96

archaic religion, 3-4, 15, 20, 25, 110-11, 164n.47

artha, 79, 108

asceticism, 1, 3-4, 30-31, 78, 80, 128;

of *brahmacarin*, 18, 110-15, 123, 128;

Brahmanic, 11, 108-24;

and knowledge, 61-62, 64-71 (see also *tapas*, knowledge and spiritual rebirth; meditation);

and purification, 195

Asceticism *(continued)* 49-53, 55;

ritual, 22, 26, 34-38, 41, 53, 55-57, 80-81, 84, 86, 89, 105;

of sannyasin, 105, 118, 120-22;

of *vanaprastha*, 116-18. *See also* austerity; *tapas*

asrama(s), 6, 11, 17, 33, 67, 78-79, 102, 107-10, 115-22, 124, 134, 146. See also specific *asramas*

Asuras, 62, 95

Asvalayana Grhya Sutra, 114

Asvins, 17, 22-28, 143

Atharva Veda, 2, 8, 15-19, 21-22, 30-31, 33, 39, 42, 46, 48-51, 58, 63-69, 73, 77, 94-95, 110-12, 115-18, 122-23, 126-27, 134

Atisdmtapana penance, 58

Atman, 77-78, 83, 85-88, 90-93, 95, 98-100, 118-19, 122, 136, 138, 141, 146, 170n.5

atonement, 54, 57, 60, 121, 145

Atri (a *rsi)*, 23

austerity, 4, 22, 31, 48, 50, 68, 86, 111, 123, 144, 146. *See also* asceticism; penance; *tapas*

Avabhrtha, 5, 20, 78, 84, 97, 113, 115, 146

Avantaradiksa, 26, 47, 55, 69

B

bandhu, 1, 6, 9, 63, 73, 95. *See also* homology; identities; *nidana*

Baudhayana Dharma Sastra, 58-59. 113-114

Baudhayana Srauta Sutra, 132

beard, 20, 36, 113, 116-18, 121, 1:

begging, 68, 112, 114-15, 118. *See also* alms

Bergaigne, Abel, 13, 17

Bhagavad Gita, 109

bhakti-marga, 93

bhiksu, 6, 110

Bhrgu, 92

Biardeau, Madeleine, 102-03, 105-07, 129

bird, 33, 90, 140

birth, 4, 7, 16, 29-33, 37, 39, 41, 43, 99, 125, 129-30, 136-37, 143, 145. *See also* procreation; *tapas*, birth and spiritual rebirth; *tapas* and procreation; transmigration

black deer's horn, 131

Blair, Chauncey, 23, 32, 46, 49, 66

blood, 53, 56-57, 139

Bloomfield, Maurice, 49

boat(s), 87, 141

bone(s), 53, 56-57, 98-99, 128

brahmacarin (Vedic student), 6, 9, 17, 33, 109-18, 121-24, 127;

  and fertility, 17-20;

  and knowledge, 64-71. *See also* asceticism, of; rebirth, spiritual, of

brahmacarya, 39-40, 65, 68, 111-12, 117-18, 124, 146, 167n.109;

  at *Agnicayana*, 39-40;

  and fertility, 17-21. *See also* chastity

brahmacarya asrama, 6, 17-18, 20, 66, 110-14, 116. See also *brahmacdrin*

Brahman (as cosmic foundation), 63, 67, 77-79, 83, 85, 87-88, 90-95, 99, 114, 118-20, 122, 137-38, 140, 146, 170n.5;

  two forms of, 170n.6

brahman (as power of ritual sound), 8, 74, 77, 94, 102

Brahmanas, 2, 7, 9, 16, 22, 30, 32, 34, 36, 47, 50-51, 53-55, 57-59, 61, 63-64, 73, 75, 78-80, 90, 97, 99, 104-05, 110, 115, 129, 133-35

Brahmanaspati, 95

Brahma Sutra, 118

brahmavarcas, 69

Brahmayajña, 114

Brahmin (priest), 56, 59-60, 114;

"ideal," 106-09

---

breath, 58-59, 61, 97-99, 102, 111, 118. See also *pranayama*

Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, 76, 83, 86, 89, 91-94, 96-97, 138

brooding, 33, 64, 78, 90-91, 96, 123-24, 141, 144, 146. *See also* meditation

Buddhist ascetics, 183n.203

bull, 26, 46, 95

butter, 58

C

candala, 120

Candrdyana penance, 57

"challenge and assimilation model," 108-09, 124

Chandogya Upanisad, 39, 67, 76, 83, 86, 90-91, 97-98, 116, 121, 136, 138, 140-41

chastity, 4, 18, 34, 40, 68, 88, 111-13, 122-23, 128, 139, 144

Christian mysticism, 5

churning process, 32, 160n.110

clay, 37

conception, 7, 17, 39-40, 159n.79

continuity in Vedic religion, 102-09, 124

cosmogony, 32-33, 90, 99. *See also* creation

creation, 3, 7-8, 16, 25, 29-30, 64, 89, 99, 129, 144, 147;

and *Agnicayana*, 36-38. *See also* cosmogony

cremation, 42-43

D

danger, 126-27, 130-33

Death, 126-27, 133, 139, *See also* Yama

death: of the gods, 54;

literal, 7, 40, 42, 52, 58, 75-76, 87, 93, 95, 97, 106, 120-22, 131-33, 140-41 *(see also* transmigration);

symbolic, 4, 39, 52, 63, 73, 125-31, 133-34, 137, 160n.110

desire, 29, 31, 76-77, 93, 137-38, 144. See also *kama*

Deussen, Paul, 33, 61, 83, 137

dharma, 60, 79-80, 85, 108, 119-21, 139

Dharma Sastras, 75, 78-80, 108, 110, 116, 134

Dharma Sutras, 33, 48, 65, 75, 79-80, 110, 116, 134

dice, 49

Diksa, 5, 23, 26, 34-35, 38-39, 41, 97, 113, 115, 126, 128-29, 131, 134-35, 137, 146;

and purification, 50-53, 55

diksita, 34-35, 40, 51-53, 56-58, 61, 69-71, 113, 128, 130-31, 134, 160n. 110. See also *Diksa: diksitayajamana;* sacrificer; *yajamana*

diksita-yajamdna, 5-6, 34, 39, 69, 84, 145-46;

and rainfall and fertility, 20-28. See also *diksita;* sacrificer; *yajamana*

disease, 49

Dumont, Louis, 108-09

durohana, 130, 133

E

Edgerton, Franklin, 32

egg, 32-34, 64, 69, 90-91, 144, 146

Eggeling, Julius, 36, 54, 129

Ekam Sat, 94

Eliade, Mircea, 1, 3, 11, 18, 88, 108, 110-11, 114, 125-26, 128

embryo, 4, 32-44, 69, 113, 118, 125-29, 131, 133-35, 137, 139, 143, 145-46, 160n.110. See also *garbha;* initiation, symbols of

enas, 48, 55-56. *See also* evil, *papman*

enemies, 45-46, 62, 106, 143-44

epistemology, 90-92, 146

error at the sacrifice, 74

---

evil, 4, 48, 50, 54-59, 88, 111, 131, 145. See also *enas; papman*

F

faith, 67, 88

fasting, 4, 34-35, 39, 53, 61, 68, 111-113, 118, 123-24, 128, 144-46;

as penance, 57-58

fertility, 4, 15, 18-19, 21-29, 80. See also *tapas*, and rainfall and fertility

fervor, 21, 61, 144-45

fever, 49, 144

fingernails, 20, 36, 56, 58-59, 113, 117, 121, 123, 131

fire, 5-7, 31-32, 34, 62, 64, 74, 91, 97-98, 102, 114, 117, 132, 134-35, 143-45;

funeral, 41-43, 52, 143;

and knowledge, 61, 65-67 (*see also* Agni, and knowledge);

and purification, 46-48, 52, 55-56, 58-60 (*see also* Agni, and purification);

and rainfall and fertility, 15-17, 21-28. *See also* Agni; altar

fire-pan, 31, 38, 132

fluid, 25

forest, 68, 78, 80, 86-88, 92, 112, 117, 130

G

Gambler's Hymn, 49

garbha, 32, 39-40. *See also* embryo

garbhadhana, 39-40

Garbha Upanisad, 137

Garhapatya fire, 34

Gautama Dharma Sutra, 56-57

Gayatri, *59*

gharma, 20-28, 154n.62. *See also* milk, at *Pravargya; tapta-gharma*

Gobhila Grhya Sutra, 68

Gonda, Jan, 7, 10, 18-19, 52, 66-67, 111, 115, 118, 131, 135

Gopatha Brahmana, 62, 64

grhastha, 102, 109, 129. *See also* householder

grhastha asrama, 6, 103, 107

Grhya Sutras, 12, 18, 21, 40, 75, 110, 114-16, 123, 134

Griffith, Ralph, 17, 54

groomsmen, 31

H

hair, 20-21, 36, 53, 56-58, 97-98, 113, 115, 117-18, 121, 123, 131

Hamsa Upanisad, 118

Hauer, Jacob, 18, 61, 66, 68, 126-27

head, 66

heart, 49-50, 140-41

heat. *See* magical heat; *tapas*

heaven, 7, 16, 26, 41-43, 53-54, 62, 64, 69, 73, 76, 94-95, 98, 134, 140, 147, 162n. 1. *See also* heavenly realm

heavenly realm, 52-55, 129-30, 132-33, 138, 141, 143. *See also* heaven

Heesterman, J. C., 11, 16, 21, 103, 105-07, 109, 129

Helfer, James S., 125-27

hell(s), 138-40

hen, 29, 146. *See also* egg

herb, 32

hieros gamos, 25

Hiltebeitel, Alf, 186n.83

Hinduism, 102-03, 105, 109, 116, 135

Hiranyagarbha, 32, 186n.83

homology, 1-3, 6, 8-11, 15, 67;

of asceticism and sacrifice, 80, 110, 112-15;

of man, sacrifice, and cosmos, 8, 93, 96-100,

of milk and rain, 24, 27-28;

of milk and semen, 25, 27-28;

of sacrificer and *Mahavira,* 23-28, 40;

of sacrificer and Prajapati, 40;

of sacrificer and sacrifice, 8, 20, 37, 41;

of sacrificer and victim, 41, 129-30, 133;

of sweat and rain, 21-23, 26-28. See also *bandhu,* identities, *nidana*

Hopkins, Thomas, J., 108

Horse Sacrifice, 96

hotr priest, 74

householder, 78-80, 85-86, 110-11, 115. See also *grhastha*

Hubert, Henri, 128-29, 131-33

Hume, Robert, 54, 86

hut, 34-35, 38, 126-32, 134, 160n.110

I

identities, 3, 6, 8-9, 40, 73, 94-96, 105-06. See also *bandhu,* homology, *nidana*

ignorance (*avidya*), 76-77, 88

illusion, 95

immortality, 62-64, 75-76, 86, 95, 100, 118, 138, 140-41;

of sacrificer, 9, 35, 39-41, 43, 75, 86, 134

Indra, 25, 46, 94-95

initiation, 1-2, 33, 43, 67, 69, 111, 115, 117, 119, 121 (see also *Diksa*; *Upanayana*)*;*

dramatic element in, 45, 125-41;

symbols of, 1-2, 4-6, 10, 31, 33, 125-26, 130-41. *See also* danger; death, symbolic; embryo; womb

intercourse, 18-19, 29, 31, 39-40

Isa Upanisad, 93

J

Jaiminiya-Upanisad Brahmana, 31-32, 41, 58, 128

Jain ascetics, 183n.203

Jamadagni, 64

jambha, 127

jealousy, 49-50, 144

jñana, 1, 12, 73-75, 77-79, 87, 91-92, 120, 123-24, 146. *See also* knowledge; *vidya*

jñana-kanda, 6, 9-12, 74-80, 84-85, 88-90, 95-96, 99, 110, 119-20, 123-24, 146. *See also* Upanisads

jñana-marga, 74-75, 79

jñana-prasada, 87

K

Kala, 94

Kama, 94

kama, 31-32, 76-77, 79, 108. *See also* desire

Kane, P. V., 115, 121

karma, 1, 76-77, 79-80, 85, 120, 123-24, 136;

as ritual action, 8-10, 12, 73-76, 85-88, 146

karma-kdnda, 6, 8, 10-12, 74-75, 79-81, 96, 110, 119-20, 146

karma-marga, 74-75, 79

Katha Upanisad, 92-93, 126-27, 136-38

Kausika Sutra, 87, 92, 138

Keith, A. B., 54, 61, 83

Kena Upanisad, 83

kesins, 65, 68

king, 7, 21

Knipe, David, 2, 9-10, 31

knowledge, 1-2, 4, 6, 8-10, 33, 50, 60, 73-75, 135, 140;

liberating, 12, 75, 77-80, 83-93, 99, 103, 136 (see also *moksa; jñana-kanda;* Upanisads). See also *jñana; tapas*, knowledge and spiritual rebirth; *vidya*

Koller, John M., 8

Ksatriya, 60

L

Lévi, Sylvain, 130, 132

liberation, 77-80, 93, 99-100, 108-09, 119-20, 122. See also *moksa*

lightening, 17, 143

linga, 25

loom, image of, 8-9, 96-97, 147, *See also* weaving

love, 31

M

Magadha, 18

magic, 19, 46, 111

magical heat, 3, 5, 30, 58, 111, 144, 164n.47. See also *tapas*

Mahabharata, 18, 25, 186n.83

Mahdsdmtapana penance, 58

Mahavira, 23-28, 40

Mahavrata, 18

Maitri Upanisad, 59, 83, 88, 92, 95, 122, 136-37, 141

Malamoud, Charles, 102

Manava Dharma Sastra (Manu), 10, 12, 48, 55-56, 58-60, 62, 65, 68-69, 79, 110, 116, 122-23, 134, 136-37, 139-40, 147

Manava Grhya Sutra, 69

"man-in-the-world," 108-09

marriage, 116

Maruts, 22

Matarisvan, 94

Mauss, Marcell, 128-29, 131-33

maya, 1

meaninglessness of ritual, 104-05

medha, 68-69, 91

Medhajanana, 66, 68

meditation, 78, 80, 85-88, 90, 93, 95-97, 99-100, 124, 140-41, 146. *See also* brooding

milk, 17, 35, 53, 57-58, 114, 128;

  at the *Pravargya,* 20-28, 145

mind *(manas),* 50, 67, 74, 88, 91-93, 97, 99, 141

Mitra, 94-95

moksa, 76, 78-80, 97, 108, 120, 146. *See also* liberation

moksadharma, 121

monism, 93, 99, 170n.5

Mookerji, R. K., 61, 63

moon, 57, 98

mortality, 54. *See also* immortality

Munddaka Upanisad, 87, 91-92, 136, 138, 141

muni, 99, 101, 105-06

N

Naciketas, 127

naisthika-brahmacdrin, 121-22

New and Full Moon Sacrifice, 47, 51, 62

niddna, 1, 6, 9, 73, 95. See also *bandhu;* homology; identities

Nikhilananda, Swami, 86

nirvana, 1

O

O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger, 10, 13, 17, 19, 25, 39, 101, 103

Oldenberg, Hermann, 9, 20, 61, 111, 126

Olivelli, Patrick, 108, 116, 119, 121

Om, 65, 88, 90, 141

ontology, 90-92, 146

orgasm, 25, 144-45

orthodoxy, 6, 8-10, 75, 78, 80, 107-11, 113, 115-16, 118-21;

  sacrifice as central to, 8, 34, 84

"orthogenetic model," 107-09, 124

P

pain, 45, 49-51, 53, 57-58

pañcha mahayajñas, 102, 114

pancha tapansi, 117

papman, 48, 54-55. See also *enas,* evil

Paraskara Grhya Sutra, 113

parivrajaka, 6, 110

Parjanya, 19, 25

Paryagnikarana, 47

penance, 4, 31, 49-50, 54-60, 121, 139;

  forms of, 57-60;

  and purification, 53-60, 145. See also *prayascitta*

persona, 76

pessimism, 76, 79-80

Pettazzoni, Raffaele, 10

phenomenological approach, 10-11, 13, 151n.40

pitrs, 43

Prajapati, 7-8, 25, 30-32, 34, 51, 54, 62, 64, 89-91, 94, 99-100, 106,

126, 129-30, 144; and *Agnicayana*, 36-38, 40, 43 *prana*, 93

Pranagnihotra, 102, 107

pranaydma, 18, 57-59, 68, 112, 124, 146

Prasna Upanisad, 88

pratiprasthatri priest, 133

Pravargya, 22-29, 40, 69-70, 157n.26

pravrajita, 6, 110

prayascitta, 55, *57*. *See also* penance

pregnant ascetic, 40

priest, 6-8, 21, 23, 34, 46, 64-66, 80, 85, 95-97, 107, 128, 132, 144-45. See also *adhvaryu;* Brahmin (priest); *hotr; pratiprasthatri*

procreation, 7, 29-32, 143-44. *See also* birth; *tapas,* and procreation

prostitute *(pumscali),* 18-19

punarmrtyu, 75, 79

purification, 102, 121. See also *tapas,* and purification

purity, 4, 106. *See also* purification

Purusa, 94, 129, 136

purusa, 102

Purusa Sukta, 8

Putrakama, 31

R

Radhakrisnan, S., 87, 91-92

rain, 4, 15-28, 40, 80, 143-45

Rajasuya, 21

riksasas, 46-48, 131, 143, 145

rebirth: biological, 75-76, 93, 122, 135-40 *(see also* transmigration);

spiritual, 4-7, 29-30, 33-44, 63-64, 73, 75, 113, 115, 125-27, 133-37, 160n.110;

spiritual, of *brahmacdrin,* 6, 33-34, 69-71, 127, 134-35;

spiritual, of sacrificer, 9, 34-44, 62, 69-71, 100, 129-33, 143

Renou, Louis, 9-10

renunciation, 5, 33, 102-04, 106-09, 119, 121, 176n.63. See also *sannydsin*

retas, 39. *See also* seed; semen

revelation, 61-62, 64-66, 145-46. See also *tapas*, knowledge and spiritual rebirth

Rg Veda, 6-8, 12, 15-17, 21-23, 45-51, 59, 61, 63-66, 68, 78, 90, 94-95, 99, 115, 138

ribs, 49

ritual. *See* sacrifice

ritual combat, 106

ritual reform, 106

Rohita, 15

rsikrt, 66

rsis, 23, 30, 36, 43, 63-64, 66, 68, 124, 146

rta, 61, 100

Rudra, 22, 95

S

sacrifice, 1-2, 5-12, 34, 47, 78, 84, 102-109;

devaluation of, 84-91, 96-97;

and initiation symbolism, 128-34 (see also *Diksa);*

interiorized, 96-98, 107 (see also *Pranagnihotra),*

knowledge of, 62, 64, 69, 73-75, 77;

and meditation, 96-98;

and rainfall and fertility, 20-28;

and renunciation, 102-03, 106-07. See also *yajña; and specific forms of sacrifice*

sacrificer, 5, 7-8, 78, 80, 144-45;

and purification, 46-57;

and rainfall and fertility, 17, 20-28. See also *diksita; diksita-yajamana; yajamana*

sacrificial cord, 114, 118-122

sacrificial stake, 132

Sakalya, 94

Sakvari Vrata, 19, 153n.44

saman chant, 97-98

Samdvartana, 6, 112-13

Samhitas, 10

samskara, 33, 39, 68

Samtapana penance, 58

Sankhayana Grhya Sutra, 66, 68

sannyasa asrama, 6

Sannyasa Upanisad, 137

sannyasin, 6, 102-03, 105, 107-10, 115-16, 118-24, 134-35, 137, 146, 178n.93

santi, 103

sap of sacrifice, 26, 28, 145

Satapatha Brahmana, 15-16, 24-25, 27, 31-33, 35, 41, 62-63, 67, 69, 89, 91, 96, 111, 118, 126-31, 133-34;

description of *Agnicayana*, 36-37, 42;

and purification, 48, 51-52, 54-55, 57-59

Sattra, 113-14

sattva, 88

satya, 61, 87, 92

Savitri, 33, 121, 134-35, 137

science of ritual, 104, 106

second-self, 36-37, 39-40, 43-44, 70, 73, 145

seed, 15-17, 19, 24, 31, 39-40, 128, 138. See also *retas;* semen

semantic evolution, 102

semen, 17, 19, 25-28, 39-40, 145. See also *retas,* seed

setu, 138

shaman, 5

silence, 26, 65, 68, 111-13, 117

Skambha, 95

skin, 53-57, 59, 97, 99, 128

Smith, Brian, 42, 103, 132-33

snake, 54, 59

society, 17, 78, 86, 107-08, 111, 117, 119-22

Soma, 7, 34, 41-42, 114, 128-30, 132

Soma Sacrifice, 38, 52, 55, 97, 113, 115, 130

Srauta ritual, 7, 105-07, 113. *See also* sacrifice

Srauta Sutras, 12, 23-24, 34, 75, 79-80, 104-05

Staal, Frits, 103-07

staff, 113, 118-20, 122, 131, 134-35

Sudra, 60

sun, 7, 30, 88, 91, 98, 117, 143, 145, 160n. 110;

and rainfall and fertility, 15, 17-18, 22-28. See also Rohita; Surya

sura, 139

Surya, 15-16, 160n.110

susumna, 141

svddhydya (recitation of the Veda), 57, 59-60, 112, 114-15, 118

Svetasvatara Upanisad, 92-93, 136-37, 141

sweat, 5, 21-23, 27-28, 63, 145

T

Taittiriya Brahmana, 54, 75, 91, 93

Taittiriya Samhita, 16, 19, 31-32, 34, 36, 47, 50, 52-53, 58, 62-63, 74, 130, 132-33

Taittiriya Upanisad, 92, 98

tapas, 1-6, 10, 12-13, 75, 160n.110, 165n.55;

as ascetic heat, 17-20, 22-23, 26, 30, 36, 44, 144-45;

birth and spiritual rebirth, 29-44, 143-46;

of *brahmacdrin*, 111-15, 117, 123, 144;

as destructive heat, 45-50, 52-53, 57-59, 143, 145;

forms of heat, 3, 143-47;

as hatching heat, 33, 90, 143-46;

"higher and lower," 84-85, 87-89, 91, 96, 123, 146;

and knowledge in the Upanisads, 83-93, 122;

knowledge, and spiritual rebirth, 61-71, 145-46;

and meditation, 96, 146 *(see also* meditation);

as natural heat, 15-18, 22, 26, 29-30, 35, 44, 143-46;

as painful heat, 49-50, 52, 57-58, 144-45;

as process and product, 2-3, 84, 144, 147;

and procreation, 30-33, 43-44, 143-44 *(see also* procreation);

and purification and penance, 45-60 *(see also* penance; purification);

and rainfall and fertility, 15-28, 143, 145-46;

as ritual heat, 20-28, 34-36, 44, 144-46;

of *sannyasin,* 118, 120, 122, 124, 146;

as sexual heat, 30-32, 144-45;

of *vanaprastha*, 115-18, 124, 146

tapaspati, 47-48, 53

tapasvin, 15-17, 26, 32, 46, 65, 69, 116

tapta-gharma, 22-28, 145

Taptakrcchra penance, 58

tapta-mdrga, 6, 43, 60, 70, 124, 141, 146-47, 150n.21

tapus, 45, 162n.3

teacher, 33, 67, 69, 112, 114, 121-23, 126-27, 134-35, 137

teeth, 46

testicles, 25

theism, 93, 170n.5

Tibet, 5

tomb, 42

transcendence, 105-07

transmigration *(samsara),* 75-77, 79-80, 83, 85-86, 118-19, 122;

evil of, 136-40;

and initiation symbolism, 133, 135-41. *See also* rebirth, biological

twice-born *(dvi-ja),* 6, 33, 69, 78, 110, 116, 120, 124, 127, 134-35, 137, 146

tyaga, 102-03

U

Uddalaka, 76-77, 93

unilateral creation, 19, 25, 37, 40

Upakarman, 68

Upakosala, 67

Upanayana, 6, 17, 33, 66-68, 111-18, 121, 126-27, 134-35, 137

Upanisads, 6, 9, 12, 32, 61, 73, 75, 77, 79-81, 83-100, 103, 109, 119-24, 133, 135-36, 146

Upasads, 23, 26, 35-36, 38, 41, 53, 57, 97

V

Vaikhanasasmarta Sutra, 117, 121-22

Vaisya, 60

Vdjasaneyi Samhitd, 15, 17, 48, 51, 59

vanaprastha, 6, 68, 102, 107, 110, 115-19, 122-24, 134, 137, 146

vanaprastha asrama, 6, 86

Van Buitenen, Hans, 16, 23-25, 69

Van der Leeuw, G., 10

Van Gennep, Arnold, 113

Varuna, 92, 94-95, 131

Vasistha Dharma Sastra, 56-60

vayu, 93

Veda, as a living unit, 10-11

Vesci, Uma Marina, 2, 42-43

victim (animal, at sacrifice), 36, 42, 102-03, 129, 132-33, 143, 162n.1

vidya, 1, 6, 9, 66, 69, 74, 86, 88, 92. See also *jñana;* knowledge

village, 85-86

Viraj, 64, 168n.13

visions, 4, 61, 64-66, 145-46

Visnu (law book), 58-59, 95, 116, 134, 136-37, 139

Visvakarman, 94

vrata(s), 18, 20, 26, 68-69, 112-113, 122

Vrddha-Harita, 120

W

water(s), 16-17, 25, 32. 34, 51, 58, 113

weaving, image of, 8, 147. *See also* loom